

city of saint paul
planning commission resolution
file number 11-73
date September 2, 2011

WHEREAS, the Union Park District Council has filed an appeal (# 11-260-156) of a decision by the Zoning Administrator to approve a site plan submitted by Industrial Equities LLP for an office/warehouse building (# 10-906716), on property located at 650 Pelham Blvd, Parcel Identification Number (PIN) 322923210029, legally described as Geo H Watsons Rearrangement Subj To Blvd And Hwy The W 225 Ft Of Blk B under the provisions of Section 67.701.b the Saint Paul Legislative Code; and

WHEREAS, the Zoning Committee of the Planning Commission, on August 25, 2011, held a public hearing at which all persons present were given an opportunity to be heard pursuant to said application in accordance with the requirements of §61.303 of the Saint Paul Legislative Code; and

WHEREAS, the Saint Paul Planning Commission, based on the evidence presented to its Zoning Committee at the public hearing as substantially reflected in the minutes, made the following findings of fact:

1. The appeal filed by Union Park District Council begins by listing four main issues as the basis for the appeal:
 - "The site plan is not consistent with planning documents for the site", including the Central Corridor Development Strategy, Raymond Station Area Plan, and Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan.
 - The City Code encourages buildings to "hold the corner" on sites at intersections.
 - There was no community design process to effectively resolve community concerns with the project.
 - The City Council did not zone the site TN as recommended in planning documents."

The appeal continues with a section describing how Union Park believes the plan is not consistent with provisions from a number of City planning documents.

The appeal concludes with a request that the Planning Commission requires that the site plan be designed to conform to the following standards that address Union Parks concerns:

- Buildings should hold the corners at Pelham and Wabash; there should not be more than 15 feet between the sidewalk and any building

moved by Kramer
seconded by _____
in favor 15
against 1 (Fernandez)

- Sidewalks should be installed on both Pelham and Wabash.
 - Buildings should have façade articulation consistent with the historic district at Pelham and University
 - Any parking spaces should be behind the building or underground to reduce pervious pavement and encourage the use of public transportation, especially the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit.
 - There should be at least two occupied stories on any building at the site
 - Windows adjacent to the streets should be prominent and perpetuate a storefront
 - Doorways should be located close to street and emphasized architecturally
 - Incorporate artistic elements reflective of the Creative Enterprise artists
 - Increased building density
 - Mixed commercial and industrial use at the site
 - Design any building at the site to facilitate and encourage the growth and expansion of our local industry and buildings. First opportunity for tenants at the site should be local businesses looking to expand. Confirm tenants for the building prior to construction.
2. The site plan is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, Raymond Station Area Plan and other City plans.

The zoning code does not require a building at this location to “hold the corner”.

A community design process is not a requirement of site plan review.

The Planning Commission and the City Council both voted to retain the I1 zoning for the property and not change it to T4.

A more detailed response to specific issues raised in the appeal is provided in attached Exhibit A.

3. The site plan complies with zoning standards and all other applicable ordinances of the City.

Office/warehouse is a permitted use in I1. One-story buildings are permitted in I1. The building and site conform to Citywide design standards. The site plan meets the standards for stormwater set by the City and the Capitol Region Watershed. The developer submitted a Traffic Impact Study for the project which was reviewed and approved by Saint Paul Public Works. The site plan meets zoning standards for landscaping.

4. The site plan is consistent with traffic and pedestrian safety and convenience if the following conditions are added to the site plan approval issued by the Zoning Administrator.
- An additional pedestrian connection from the public sidewalk on Pelham to the southwest corner of the building must be constructed.
 - A public sidewalk must be provided on the south side of Wabash if City staff determines that a sidewalk can be provided that is consistent with pedestrian safety in light of the existing nearby railroad track.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Saint Paul Planning Commission, under the authority of the City's Legislative Code, that the appeal filed by the Union Park District Council of a decision by the Zoning Administrator to approve a site plan submitted by Industrial Equities LLP for an office/warehouse building (# 10-906716), on property located at 650 Pelham Blvd is hereby denied; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the site plan is approved with the following additional conditions:

1. An additional pedestrian connection from the public sidewalk on Pelham to the southwest corner of the building must be constructed.
2. A public sidewalk must be provided on the south side of Wabash if City staff determines that it is possible to provide both street trees and a sidewalk that is consistent with pedestrian safety in light of the existing nearby railroad track.

EXHIBIT A

RESPONSE TO ISSUES RAISED IN THE APPEAL ARE IN BOLD INDENTED TEXT

August 1, 2011

**Planning Commission of the City of St Paul
15 W Kellogg Blvd
St Paul, MN 55102**

Re: Site Plan 10-906716

Appeal of Site Plan for Meridian Industrial Center at 650 Pelham Boulevard

The Union Park District Council (UPDC) appeals the staff approval to allow for construction of a 68,000 sq. ft. building at 650 Pelham Boulevard. Tom Beach, Zoning Specialist of the City of St Paul, approved this site plan on July 20, 2011.

The Union Park District Council has thoroughly reviewed the site plans as set forth in the staff-approved documents, explained by the Port Authority at a public meeting held by Union Park on June 27th, 2011, in relevant City zoning codes, and in subsequent meetings with City staff, Port Authority staff, and community representatives.

Based on this review, it is the position of the UPDC that the approval of this site plan is not soundly based in conjunction with city-approved planning documents for the site, nor in the best interest of the City of St. Paul or its residents. Because of this, the UPDC must conclude that the site plan will allow a single developer to gain economic advantage in developing this parcel while spreading adverse effects over the immediate neighborhood, the city, and its residents.

The Union Park District Council urges the Saint Paul Planning Commission to reverse the decision to approve the requested Site Plan #10-906716 for a development at Pelham and Wabash.

The following details our rationale for this appeal:

1. The site plan is not consistent with planning documents for the site.
2. The City Code encourages buildings to 'hold the corner' on sites at intersections.
3. There was no community design process to effectively resolve community concerns with the project.
4. The City Council did not zone the site TN as recommended in planning documents.

1. The Meridian Industrial Project Site Plan is not consistent with content in the following planning documents:

- St. Anthony Park Community District Plan
- Merriam Park Master Plan
- Central Corridor Development Strategy

- Raymond Station Area Plan
- St Paul Comprehensive Plan
- Mississippi River Corridor Plan
- West Midway Task Force

A. The Site Plan does not conform to standards incorporated in the St Anthony Park Community Council District Plan

Land Use 4. Study potential locations to rezone around commercial and industrial areas to establish a gradual transition between land uses and building forms to assure compatibility of adjacent land uses and densities. Goal is to buffer single-family uses with more appropriate uses (multi-family) near commercial and industrial areas.

The Meridian Industrial Center is not an appropriate buffer between the single-family homes to the south and the transit-oriented development (TOD) to the north.

This area was studied as part of the CC/TN Zoning Study and City Council unanimously decided to have the 650 Pelham site remain I-1. I-94 buffers the site from the single-family homes to the south.

Design Standards. Institute commercial mixed-use design standards that reinforce human-scale buildings, promote sustainable design, promote quality in exterior materials and construction, reinforce a pedestrian oriented streetscape, promote green design, manage storm water retention, reduce impervious surfaces and visually screen surface parking.

The building's setback does not facilitate a pedestrian-oriented streetscape; neither does fencing. The building's entrance should be immediately off the curb and the façade should incorporate the historic nature of both the Desnoyer Park neighborhood and the Raymond/University historic zone.

The primary commercial mixed-use district in the city is the Traditional Neighborhood district. The 650 Pelham site is in an Industrial Zoning district and is subject to and meets the I-1 setback requirements and building standards, Sec. 63.110. A sidewalk with boulevard trees and pedestrian-scaled lighting will be built as part of the project. Surface parking will be screened from the public sidewalk with landscaping and architectural fencing. The site is not in a historic district, so historic design requirements cannot be applied to the site.

9. Conduct zoning study as part of the Raymond area station planning to evaluate rezoning the University-Raymond TOD district to TN districts to achieve standards and design that respect the area's historic quality, enhance its pedestrian accessibility, and encourage increased transit use.

The area was part of the Central Corridor overlay district, but 650 Pelham remained I1. This zoning allows the site, although it is in both the Area of Change for the Raymond Station and specified as a major site for redevelopment corridor-wide, with few restrictions.

The Area of Change was studied under the Central Corridor/Traditional Neighborhood Zoning Study for the purpose of recommending permanent zoning changes along the corridor to replace the interim Central Corridor Overlay zoning district. The 650 Pelham, included in the Central Corridor/Traditional Neighborhood Zoning Study, was determined by a unanimous City Council to remain I-1.

Streetscape Enhancement Plan. Develop and implement a long-term streetscape plan to achieve the economic development, livability, identity and transportation goals of the community.

The Meridian Industrial Center, as is, sets a minimal standard of development for the area. This project will facilitate other developments along Pelham and in the corridor to build to the developer's needs and not to the potential of the corridor. This project is underutilizing the site and scoffing hundreds of people's time and work visioning the future of the corridor.

10. Evaluate opportunities to create parkways with emphasis on trees, interconnections with parks, bike lanes and boulevard plantings where possible. Parkway should create new transportation and pedestrian connections, calm traffic, and create neighborhood identity.

The Wabash Commons, open space proposed for just north of the site, requires a better transitional building between the Desnoyer neighborhood and the open space. Pedestrians travel along Pelham for work, play, shopping, and transportation. Pelham is a corridor that connects CCLRT to Union Park's westernmost neighborhood, and being the only north-south connection between the Mississippi River and Cretin Ave, Pelham Blvd is essentially, and naturally, both a transportation and pedestrian connection that needs to be enhanced.

Pelham also serves as the route for the Midtown Greenway and is a current bicycle route for many traveling by the alternate means of transportation. The Meridian Industrial Center needs to better emphasize its location on the bike route and encourage more bike travel to and along Pelham.

11. Create gateways of architectural and landscape significance to announce entry into the neighborhood.

The St. Anthony Park Community Council's top priority for a new parkway is Raymond Avenue. This would include a realigned Raymond Avenue south of University to connect with Pelham Boulevard just north of Interstate 94.

Policies 10 and 11 are subsets of the 'Streetscape Enhancement Plan' which instructs St. Anthony Park to 'develop and implement a long-term streetscape plan to achieve the economic development, livability, identity, and transportation goals of the community.' There has been no adopted above standard streetscape plan at this location. The 650 Pelham project will build streetscape improvements including, a new sidewalk, planted boulevard, street trees and the city standard lantern-style street light along Pelham Boulevard as part of the project. These improvements will enhance the north-south pedestrian connection as well as the regional bike route along Pelham Boulevard. The project's design does not preclude a future connection to a Midtown Greenway extension or the addition of a community gateway in the right-of-way at a future date.

The St Anthony Park community plans to realign a better connection between Pelham and Raymond, a development that will significantly improve Pelham Avenue and require better streetscape and transition into the station. The Meridian Industrial Center is proposed at a unique location, with a prominent neighborhood immediately south and a vibrant urban village just blocks north. The development should transition between the two, facilitating a sense of space and encourage pedestrian travel and an urban, not suburban design.

26. All new commercial and industrial developments requiring site plan approval should generally be designed to have at least the main entrance facade oriented to the street with access for pedestrians and

bicyclists taking priority over vehicular access.

As communicated clearly to the developers, the communities surrounding the site want to have development. It has also been clearly communicated that any development needs to hold the corner at Pelham and Wabash.

Main entrances of the 650 Pelham project are oriented toward the street. A sidewalk with boulevard trees and pedestrian-scaled lighting and direct pedestrian connections from the public sidewalk to the main entrances will be built as part of the project. Sec. 63.110 states, "In pedestrian-oriented commercial districts characterized by storefront commercial buildings built up to the public sidewalk, new principal structures shall have a maximum setback of fifteen (15) feet from a commercial front lot line. At intersections, buildings shall "hold the corner," that is, have street facades within fifteen (15) feet of the lot line along both streets, or the site plan shall have vertical structural elements that "hold the corner." A primary entrance shall face a primary abutting public street." This site on Pelham is not in a "pedestrian-oriented commercial districts characterized by storefront commercial buildings built up to the public sidewalk." Therefore the project is consistent with the required conditions and is not required to "hold the corner."

B. The Meridian Industrial Center does not conform to standards in the Merriam Park Community Master Plan (adopted by the City Council as an Addendum to the City of St. Paul's Comprehensive Plan 4 Feb 2004)

The intent of the Merriam Park Community Plan was to continue to develop the Merriam Park neighborhood into an urban village. Strong single-family homes and engaged neighbors helped to create a plan that would better reflect and guide the future of the area.

2. Major new development should be mixed-use and located along transit routes or on underused or inappropriately developed sites

The Meridian Industrial Center does not follow these guidelines, set forth to better facilitate the transition close to residential neighborhoods.

15. Merriam Park should be a friendly, encouraging place for small to medium-sized businesses to grow. Expansion of existing businesses will be favored over the establishment of new businesses, particularly those that would have a negative impact on the community because of congestion, character, or use. The expansion of local business to the site should have priority.

21. This plan supports the St. Paul Land Use Plan's definition of green spaces, parks, and the river as urban amenities. Green spaces and corridors should be encouraged in the community wherever possible, such as along railroad tracks and roads.

The Merriam Park Master Plan encourages green space along rail tracks, and this site has excellent potential with its location situated between a current neighborhood and proposed green space at Wabash Commons.

24. The community supports initiatives that promote biking, busing, and other means of transportation as alternatives to single-occupant vehicles. Bike lanes, and bikes racks in commercial areas and on buses should be added. Connecting St. Paul to the Midtown Greenway in Minneapolis is supported when

feasible.

The developer needs to acknowledge and incorporate the future Midtown Greenway and the intrinsic connection this site has to that project.

In response to Section B pertaining to Merriam Park Community Plan, The location of the 650 Pelham site does not fall within the boundaries of Merriam Park Community Plan (now Union Park) and therefore, cannot be required to adhere to the standards of the Merriam Park Community Plan.

The Site Plan does not conform to expectations of the Desnoyer neighborhood.

The Desnoyer Park Improvement Association believes that the project design is not keeping with its urban neighborhood, and may sit empty without tenants after construction. It is not a long-term development, but merely a hasty development that is not reflective of the neighborhood's needs. The land is immediately across a walking bridge from homes and the fact that it is so close to a main artery of the Central Corridor requires more thought and community input. A UPDC community meeting residents spoke to their concerns for the project, which were not addressed and remain.

The 650 Pelham site does not lie within the Desnoyer Park Improvement Association boundaries, which, according to the Desnoyer Park Improvement Association website, extends north only to I-94.

C. The Site Plan does not conform to standards incorporated in the Central Corridor Development Strategy (adopted by City Council in 2007)

Outlining how the Central Corridor should be developed, the CC Development Strategy describes the vision and a set of strategies for how the Central Corridor should grow and change in response to the investment in LRT. The six principles in the strategy, guiding the preparation of plans for each of the transit station areas, are:

- *Reposition Saint Paul in the region.*
- *Benefit and strengthen the diverse community along the Central Corridor.*
- *Link and foster economic activity.*
- *Improve people's mobility throughout their community.*
- *Improve the image and quality of life along the Central Corridor.*
- *Collaborate from design to operation.*

The Meridian Industrial project does not incorporate and place-making features that will strengthen the community along CCLRT, nor

The principles cited do not refer to or define "place-making features." The 650 Pelham project provides a new location for businesses in Saint Paul. The project will provide employment opportunities in close proximity to the Central Corridor. The future businesses at the site will foster economic activity. Streetscape enhancements built as part of the project will provide infrastructure for improved mobility. These streetscape improvements will improve the image of the public realm.

3.2 Site has been identified as a Major Opportunity for Development within the area of change. There is heightened potential for the future development at the site.

The map indicates that at the Major Opportunities for Investment, “the characteristics of these development sites will vary as will the form and scale of redevelopment.” The site plan meets the requirements of the plan.

3.3 Towards a Transit-Supportive Corridor Making Development “Fit”

- *Design new development to provide a transition in scale and ensure it fits into its surroundings, improves existing street conditions, and integrates well with existing neighborhoods and communities.*
- *Achieve minimum ground level floor-to-ceiling heights of 13’ along major streets such as the Avenue and at important intersections.*
- *Fill gaps in the street with new buildings or by grouping buildings to create walkable clusters of activity that will animate the public realm.*

The Meridian project does not fit with the surrounding buildings; Pelham has a variety of uses, and many building are built up to the curb. Also, none of the surrounding neighborhoods approve this development as one that will better the community, but rather set a sub-par standard of development for the area.

Pelham Boulevard has a variety of setbacks along the street. The setbacks in the site plan are consistent and conform with the existing zoning. Ground floor ceiling heights are greater than 13 feet. The 650 Pelham site provides a transition from the more intensive industrial I-2 use to the east to the I-1 zoned parcel immediately to the west across Pelham Boulevard. The site also improves north-south connectivity between the Desnoyer Park and the station area by building pedestrian streetscape improvements along Pelham Boulevard as part of the project.

Transit-Supportive Land Uses & Densities

- *Promote a mix of transit-supportive uses, such as medium-to-high density residential, small-format retail, restaurants and institutions.*
- *Provide a range of housing types and sizes that will cater to both new and existing members of the community.*
- *Animate the street by positioning entrances to individual units at grade and by locating active uses such as restaurants and retail on the ground floor.*

There needs to be an active connection to Pelham, and attractive first floor tenants.

There are several direct pedestrian connections from entrances facing Pelham Boulevard to the sidewalk, which will be built as part of the project.

Transit-Supportive Access, Circulation & Parking

- *Locate parking so that it does not detract from the image of the area by placing it internal to the block, within parking ramps, inside buildings or below ground.*
- *Seek opportunities to consolidate parking, access and servicing.*
- *Seek to develop balanced and coordinated networks of movement that allow for a mix of pedestrian, bicycle, LRT, bus, and vehicular circulation.*

The parking for the current project detract from the design of the building and draws attention away from the street. There is no consolidation of parking and a lack of focus on CCLRT transportation, biking and walking.

The parking configuration in the site plan is allowed under the existing zoning. Parking access

is consolidated to one curb-cut each on Pelham Boulevard and Wabash Avenue. Parking will likely be shared among multiple tenants and will be screened from the public right-of-way with landscaping and architectural fencing. The site plan improves pedestrian access and bicycle access to and through the site, by building streetscape improvements including a sidewalk and providing bicycle parking as part of the project.

A Green, Attractive & Connected Pedestrian Environment

- *Design open spaces as a focus for new development and work towards improving pedestrian amenities along the Corridor, especially adjacent to stations.*
- *Extend existing streets, open spaces and open space linkages to strengthen connections with the surrounding community*

There needs to be planned connectivity to the future Wabash Commons.

The future location of Wabash Commons is not known. The Raymond Station Area Plan states, “While the eventual location and configuration of these spaces may be different than the images presented here...” When Wabash Commons is created and/or Wabash Avenue is redeveloped there will be opportunity to improve connectivity. The 650 Pelham project will improve pedestrian and bicycle connectivity and add green space along Pelham Boulevard.

In addition, the outlined Market Potential of the Station Area outlines that by 2030 there will be no industrial in the Raymond station area. This proposed project would far outlast that projection if built, deviating from the desired use at the station area. (Image attached)

These are estimates based on the best information available at the time the plans were written. They are not a mandate for what will be developed over time. Figure 2.2 of the Raymond Station Area Plan indicates that existing industrial uses will be “preserved/redeveloped.” The 650 Pelham project could include office space, which was estimated at a demand of 100,000 square feet by 2014.

D. The Site Plan does not conform to standards incorporated in the Raymond Station Area Plan

The Raymond area is historically St. Paul’s largest industrial district. The properties are typically one to seven-story brick and stone structures that originally housed factories, warehouses, offices, and commercial spaces.

2.3 Defining the Study Area

The Raymond Station Area has potential to evolve as a place with more employment, a greater range of businesses, more vibrant neighborhoods, and new and enhanced beautiful public spaces. The station area plan process used four mapping layers to investigate and understand the Raymond Station Area. The station area boundary extends east of the ¼ mile zone to capture larger potential development parcels located along Vandalia, and farther west and south to include a number of underutilized, sites with excellent access and frontage relative to Highway 280 and Interstate 94. This boundary is the primary focus for all recommendations contained within this document.

Within the boundary, a refined Area of Change has been delineated through the station area planning process. The Area of Change denotes the parcels where change is welcome and should be encouraged, whether through gradual infill, intensification or comprehensive redevelopment.

The Area of Change was developed as part of the Central Corridor Development Strategy planning process and was the basis for the Central Corridor Overlay zoning district. The Central Corridor Overlay was an interim ordinance that was put in place until permanent zoning changes could be studied and made in accordance with adopted policy. The Raymond Station Area Plan, developed after the Central Corridor Overlay, identified the Station Area Planning Boundary in which station area plan policies apply. The 650 Pelham project site is outside of Raymond Station Area Planning Boundary as shown on Figure 2.3 of the Raymond Station Area Plan. The Area of Change was then studied under the Central Corridor/Traditional Neighborhood Zoning Study for the purpose of recommending permanent zoning changes along the corridor. The site was included in the Central Corridor/Traditional Neighborhood Zoning Study and was determined by City Council to remain I-1.

2.4 Looking Ahead – the Raymond Station Area in 2030

Looking Ahead describes a community-crafted vision for the future of the Raymond Station Area. This narrative generally describes the sum of desired characteristics for this community, and its future role within the broader Central Corridor. The Raymond Station Area will successfully accommodate new forms of residential and commercial infill, while preserving and strengthening both the historic character of the area and the integrity of its employment uses. The potential for a new employment district is identified adjacent to the confluence of Highway 280 and Interstate 94, where excellent access and visibility create a strong economic development opportunity. New development within the Station Area will reflect the architectural scale and character of existing historic buildings, to strengthen this emerging urban village.

This is long-term policy guidance defining desired conditions 20 years in the future. The 650 Pelham project will contribute to the vision by adding employment uses and increasing connectivity to neighborhoods.

Raymond Station Area Vision:

A model mixed-use urban village that successfully combines new and old: buildings, streets, land uses, and modes of transportation. This Station Area will evolve with an authenticity and sense of place that distinguishes it within the Corridor, and becomes a must-see district for visitors seeking to discover the places that make Saint Paul unique.

This is a 20-year vision that recognizes the Station Area will have a variety of land uses. The 650 Pelham site is outside the Station Area Planning Boundary.

FIGURE 3.3 - Wabash Commons is a focal point for the larger bicycle and pedestrian movement network and the new redevelopment parcels surrounding it.

Wabash Commons: A significant public space is proposed along the north side of Wabash to create a focal point for a future employment hub south of the Avenue. Similar to its proposed sister 'Commons' in the Westgate Station Area, the Wabash Commons is intended to be a high-quality space, enhancing the place making and real estate value for adjacent office and employment uses. Its size will support both active and passive uses.

☐ *Wabash Commons, Myrtle Hinge, Top of the Village Park and Charles Street park network offer*

opportunities to explore and illuminate the history and promise of the Raymond Area through interactive installations and interpretive walkways.

In regard to Wabash Commons, the Raymond Station Area Plan states, “While the eventual location and configuration of these spaces may be different than the images presented here, developers, city departments and other stakeholders should strive to achieve the general intent and purpose of the *Key Moves* described below. These conceptual Moves will require a range of implementation measures - from allocation of municipal capital improvements budgets to private investment and parkland dedication and/or acquisition - determined on a site-by-site basis as development occurs.” It is unclear at this time the future exact location of Wabash Commons. As stated above, it will depend upon several conditions and opportunities. The 650 Pelham project actively supports a future Wabash Commons by contributing to the City’s Parkland Dedication Fund.

□ Pelham University Gateway: a left over space, offers opportunity to mark and celebrate the entrance to the Raymond Station Area. While public art opportunities are broadly available to national and even international artists, special efforts should be made to engage local artists.

This policy does not apply to the site. Pelham University Gateway is identified as being in the right-of-way in the University/Pelham intersection and not in proximity to the proposed project.

In this burgeoning arts district, there are opportunities for private property owners to engage artists as they envision their overall developments and holdings and to commission public art, particularly where private property intersects the public right-of-way.

This text identifies an opportunity, but not a requirement that can be imposed on private property owners.

Future investment in Raymond’s Station Area must build on and strengthen the qualities of the University-Raymond Commercial Historic District. Preserving the integrity and character of the area’s defining architectural history will be vital to the continued success of land use and development in the Raymond Station Area. Nothing in this plan should be deemed to contradict the University-Raymond Commercial Historic District Design Review Guidelines, but should instead reinforce, and be read in conjunction with, this important legislative document. Also, important to the long term economic and social health of the area is the preservation of viable employment uses with a long term economic future, while continuing to promote new and diverse residential and employment uses that are transit-supportive. The Raymond Station Area requires a flexible and permissive land use strategy that emphasizes connectivity, design performance and transit-supportive qualities, including a broad mix of uses, flexibility of regulation over time, active first level uses, and shared parking solutions. Together, these approaches will assist to strengthen and repair the area’s “Main Street” quality, and reinforce the fabric of the area as a complete community with housing, employment and movement options for all.

While this overall direction will help guide change over the entire Raymond Station Area, this section describes four distinct Character Areas that will require specific policy direction to achieve their built form and land use potential over time. The following Character Areas descriptions and policy directions provide clear guidance to the forms of development and investment that will support the future of the

broader station area.

This text introduces the Character Areas and makes it clear that, “The Raymond Station Area requires a flexible and permissive land use strategy.” The Station Area Plan is not meant to be absolutely prescriptive.

4.1 Raymond Historic Village

The Raymond Historic Village will be a model of a vibrant commercial corridor that supports people living and working in a revitalized historic district. The University-Raymond Commercial Historic District, designated by the Saint Paul City Council in 2005, developed in the early 20th century (1891-1941) as the city’s largest industrial area and a national transportation center. Nearly all of the properties in the district are related to some aspect of the activities of the Minnesota Transfer Railway, or the early years of the trucking industry. The district’s 22 contributing buildings, most of them with high exterior integrity, reflect the evolution of the area from the railroad era to the interstate highway system era. A set of design review guidelines was adopted by the City Council when the district was designated. They are used by the Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) to review permits for rehabilitation, restoration, new construction and demolition. The guidelines address masonry and walls, windows and doors, signs and accessories, new construction, non-contributing and contemporary buildings, and demolition. Any proposed development within the historic district boundaries will need to comply with the HPC’s guidelines, as well as the key moves and policy directions in the Raymond Station Area Plan. The adaptive re-use of existing historic and employment buildings, and the sensitive construction of infill uses, will combine a range of residential, commercial, employment and cultural uses while maintaining and strengthening the scale and character of the existing village. Pedestrian-scaled streets will connect the main spine of the Avenue north and south to a wealth of employment anchors and stable residential communities. The LRT platform will effectively extend the village qualities of the Avenue east to Carleton. Though the Raymond village is primarily focused along University Avenue, larger full-block development parcels will exhibit a relationship and secondary orientation to inner blocks where employment uses are located.

The 650 Pelham project is outside of the Raymond Historic Area Future Character Area, (see Figure 4.1) so this section of the Raymond Station Area Plan is not relevant to this site plan.

4.1.1 Built Form-New development should fit with its surroundings.

a) New development along University Avenue should be 2 to 6 residential stories in height with transitions that respect the existing scale and character of the historic buildings along the street. The northeast corner exhibits potential for taller building heights, and could reach 6-8 stories if setback from the intersection on a 3-4 story podium-type building.

The 650 Pelham project is outside of the Raymond Historic Area Future Character Area, see Figure 4.1.

b) New development should ensure that buildings have strong street presence along University, Charles and Myrtle. Buildings along Myrtle and Charles may step down to two stories.

The 650 Pelham project is outside of the Raymond Historic Area Future Character Area, see Figure 4.1.

c) New development should be sited to ensure an adequate public realm and pedestrian promenade.

The 650 Pelham project is outside of the Raymond Historic Area Future Character Area, see Figure 4.1.

d) New buildings on corner sites should front both streets and utilize their corner positioning as a distinctive feature in their design similar to the Specialty Building.

The 650 Pelham project is outside of the Raymond Historic Area Future Character Area, see Figure 4.1.

e) Building design should incorporate materials and an architectural style that is distinguishable as contemporary, yet compatible with adjacent historic buildings through scale, rhythm, color and materials, while meeting the University-Raymond Commercial Historic District Design Guidelines. All new development should promote transparency and activity at street level.

The 650 Pelham project is outside of the Raymond Historic Area Future Character Area, see Figure 4.1.

f) First floor commercial or retail uses should help to animate the street by incorporating large glass frontages that allow the activity within to be seen from the street and have at least one entrance that is oriented towards Raymond or University Avenue, access points to the station platforms, and/or key gathering places.

The 650 Pelham project is outside of the Raymond Historic Area Future Character Area, see Figure 4.1.

g) Commercial or retail uses should be located in the first floor of all buildings within the Priority Active Frontage zones identified on page 25.

The 650 Pelham project is outside of the Raymond Historic Area Future Character Area, see Figure 4.1.

4.1.2 Land Use & Development Pattern

Urban Infill along the Avenue should have many uses.

a) A broad mix of uses should be concentrated along the edges of the Avenue where they provide an easy connection to public transit, and benefit from the visibility and profile of being located on a major transportation corridor.

The 650 Pelham project is outside of the Raymond Historic Area Future Character Area, see Figure 4.1.

b) Live-work units may be permitted on the first floor of all buildings beyond the Priority Active Frontage areas. All new private development must contribute to adjacent streetscape improvements.

The 650 Pelham project is outside of the Raymond Historic Area Future Character Area, see Figure 4.1.

g) As development occurs, seek opportunities to increase north/south mid block connections such as the one created at Carleton Lofts.

The 650 Pelham project is outside of the Raymond Historic Area Future Character Area, see Figure 4.1.

h) All streets should provide sidewalks, adequate lighting and streetscape amenity.

The University-Raymond Commercial Historic District outlined above is comprised of numerous contributing buildings, many of which are 1-2 stories in height. New development should respect the scale and character of the existing buildings while filling in the gaps to intensify the district...

The 650 Pelham project is outside of the Raymond Historic Area Future Character Area, see Figure 4.1.

4.2 A Prestige Employment District

The accessibility and centrality ... [and] highly visible and accessible frontage would be ideal for a linear corporate campus for large corporate office buildings or a series of multi-tenanted research park, laboratory and office buildings. These attributes may also make the area attractive for a new hotel and conference center catering to downtown Minneapolis and Saint Paul, the University of Minnesota, and/or the general Twin Cities Region market...

The 650 Pelham project is within the Prestige Employment District Boundary. This language describes the types of land uses that could be suitable to locate within this District over the course of the next 20 years. It is within every property owners right to develop within in a manner that conforms to the zoning code. This language is not meant to be limiting. The plan states, "*The Raymond Station Area requires a flexible and permissive land use strategy.*"

4.2.1 Built Form

c) Further east and toward the center of the Station Area, buildings should step down to a maximum height of 6-8 stories around the proposed Wabash Commons.

The 950 Pelham site is outside of the Station Area Boundary. This policy gives guidance on height maximums. The proposed building is within the maximums.

d) Full-block, large floorplate commercial developments should be permitted.

This type of floorplate is permitted, but not required.

e) New development should exhibit a strong relationship to both the Cromwell frontage and Wabash Commons to ensure there are no backlotting conditions on either of these important spaces. Commercial uses should be principally oriented towards Cromwell Avenue. Buildings adjacent to the Commons should

have direct access to it.

Building density and size at the site should reflect the potential of the corridor and the possibility of higher job density.

The proposed project will not have its back to Wabash or Cromwell. The density of the proposed project is allowed in the I-1 zoning district.

4.5 Managed Parking Strategies...To properly assess and manage Park & Ride and Hide & Ride, comprehensive strategies must be implemented so that remaining on- and off-street parking can best serve residents and businesses in the corridor, and support walkable, transit-oriented neighborhoods. Clearly, the reliance on surface parking at current development standards is a large contributor to the underutilization of land within the Station Area. A transformation from surface parking to structured and underground parking will need to happen over time and in conjunction with new development. The following policies provide the direction to facilitate this transformation that will be critical to the creation of active and vibrant streets within the Raymond Station Area.

There is a huge possibility that there will be park & hide activity with the too-large and under utilized parking lot planned for the Meridian Industrial Center.

The possibility of park and hide is a property management issue and cannot be regulated through site plan or zoning. The amount of parking proposed is allowed under the zoning code.

a) The establishment of new single-use surface parking lots on University Avenue, and the expansion of existing lots within the station areas, should be discouraged.

The lot will be shared among future tenants and is not on University Avenue. This is not an expansion of an exiting lot and it is out side of the Station Area Boundary. There will be less parking area than the previous use.

b) Major redevelopment sites should be explored for opportunities to create shared, structured or below grade parking.

This site will have shared parking among future tenants.

c) Where surface parking occurs along University Avenue this should occur to the side or behind buildings and be limited to a maximum of 60-feet in width (for the provision of 2 parking aisles and one drive aisle) and should utilize landscape buffers to minimize the impact on the pedestrian environment.

This site is not along University Avenue.

d) Parking requirements should be reduced or eliminated to reduce development costs, support transit ridership and open new possibilities for flexible live-work spaces on smaller sites where on-site parking is not available.

There should be the least amount possible of new parking created along the CCLRT, especially in the station areas. 200 spaces of parking for the proposed building is superfluous.

Parking proposed at the site is within the parking maximum allowed in the Zoning Code based

on the projected uses by the applicant.

5.1 Connections

The goal of this section is to identify improved movement options for pedestrians, transit riders and cyclists in reaching the Raymond Station Area from adjacent neighborhoods and the broader Corridor. The Connections diagram (Figure 5.1) identifies key routes to and within the Raymond Station Area, and illustrates recommendations for improving the connectivity, safety, efficiency and quality of these routes for pedestrians and cyclists, including...Midtown Greenway Connection- The long-term feasibility of reconciling grade difference between Pelham Boulevard and the future Midtown Greenway bike route should be explored.

Both Pelham and Wabash are identified in the plan as bike routes. This classification requires the explicit attention to the Greenway development and reflective development along the routes.

The 650 Pelham project will provide a new sidewalk, street trees and pedestrian scaled lighting along Pelham improving pedestrian and bicycle connectivity. The active rail spur along the south side of Wabash prohibits a sidewalk at this time for pedestrian safety. The project does not prohibit the long-term feasibility to a Midtown Greenway Connection. This connection will likely be on the Mn/DOT right-of-way south of the property.

E. The Site Plan does not conform to standards incorporated in the City of St Paul Comprehensive Plan

Implementation

[The plan aims to] capitalize on the potential of the Central Corridor. The construction of light rail transit in the Central Corridor provides opportunities for the city to realize its potential as a complex, sophisticated urban center with denser housing and employment centers.... Cultural and historic resources enhance the lives of Saint Paul residents and visitors by defining the character of the city and creating a strong link to its rich past. Protecting these resources through the use of historic preservation tools will minimize such threats as lack of maintenance, development pressures, and challenges to finding appropriate uses for contemporary times.

Land Use section of the City of St Paul Comprehensive Plan

Land Use

[This is a] Mixed-Use Corridor. This land use consists primary of thoroughfares through the city that are served by public transit (or could be in the future). Mixed-Use Corridors include areas where two or more of the following uses are or could be located: residential, commercial, retail, office, small scale industry, institutional, and open space uses. The uses in these corridors may be within a building or in buildings that are in close proximity to each other. Mixed-Use Corridors includes Neighborhood Centers, which are compact, mixed-use areas of higher density housing, as well as shopping, community amenities, and employment centers. The Central Corridor, one specific Mixed-Use Corridor, is the major transit corridor connecting Saint Paul with the University of Minnesota and Downtown Minneapolis.

The building as proposed lends itself to having more than one use permitted in the I-1 zoning district.

Provide Land for Jobs - For Saint Paul to have a strong economy and to thrive, it must have businesses with living wage jobs. The strategy focuses on providing land for employment centers that capitalize on

Saint Paul's historic strengths and emerging labor markets...

The site will have new office and warehouse space for businesses.

Promote Aesthetics and Development Standards - As Saint Paul continues to revitalize itself and to grow, it must be an attractive place to live, work, and visit. This strategy provides a framework for design and aesthetics that will engage people and help integrate the built environment into the community.

The project is subject to and meets the general design requirements, Sec. 63.110 of the Zoning Code.

2.1 Ensure the availability of sufficient quantities of land suitable for existing and new employment centers; prepare an inventory of properties zoned for industrial and commercial uses that have the potential for redevelopment as employment centers.

An inventory of vacant and underutilized buildings and land currently zoned for industrial and commercial use will provide the City and its development partners with baseline information necessary to pursue a program to develop employment centers.

The use of industrial land in this area is currently being studied as part of the West Midway Industrial Study. The Saint Paul Port Authority testified to have the 650 Pelham site remain zoned I-1 before the Planning Commission during the public hearing for the CC/TN Zoning Study. The Planning Commission recommended and the City Council unanimously agreed that I-1 zoning should remain at this location.

2.2 Promote the redevelopment of outmoded and non-productive sites and buildings so they can sustain existing industries and attract emerging

The 650 Pelham project will redevelop a site previously used for semi trailer storage to provide new office and warehouse space for businesses.

2.3 Attract industries that use best management practices regarding environmental issues (e.g., air and water quality, soil contamination, solid waste, sustainable construction practices, etc.) in their site development and operations.

We would like to see state of that art development at the site, especially due to its identified potential for redevelopment.

This policy is encouraging the business or industry itself to use best management practices as they relate to development of the site and ongoing operations. There is no indication at this time that the proposed development/developer will not be consistent with this goal.

2.15 Redevelop underutilized or vacant land in railroad corridors. [end policy statement] There has been significant redevelopment in the Phalen Corridor and the Great Northern Corridor in the last two decades. Ample acreage is available for light industry, commercial office development, and capitalization on the growth of freight rail. [end associated description]

As is consistent with the current zoning regulations, this site will be home to a light industrial

or commercial office development. The redevelopment of this site is in keeping with the stated policy goal.

*2.16 Prepare a study of the West Midway industrial area outside the line of change as identified in the **Central Corridor Development Strategy** to determine how the industrial area may be best used to strengthen Saint Paul's industrial sector and employment base (see Figure LU-G).*

The West Midway, one of Saint Paul's historic railroad corridors, is strategically located, with much of its current business activity closely tied to the railroad lines that run through it. Many existing businesses, though successful, do not employ large numbers of people. The study, in part, will focus on how the West Midway can evolve to capture "knowledge-based" business activity and to take advantage of the potential for a jobs/housing match because of its proximity to the Central Corridor.

The West Midway Study is still underway and recommendations have yet to be made.

Land Assembly 2.23 Establish site plan review standards for the I1, I2, and I3 districts for the purposes of providing for the efficient use of land and enhancing the aesthetic quality of the district. [end policy statement] TN development standards incorporated into the IR district enhance the appearance and functionality of an industrial development so the district is compatible with nearby commercial and residential areas. Efficient use of a parcel will yield greater numbers of jobs for each acre of development than inefficient use. [end associated description]

More than 68 jobs should be required for the site, especially due to its proximity to residential areas.

The number of jobs on a given parcel or in a particular development is not tied to the site plan review process. There are no zoning code requirements that regulate numbers of jobs. It is the understanding of staff that the project will meet the Saint Paul Port Authority's criteria relative to the number of jobs.

3.2 Prepare design standards that provide a transition between single-family houses and nearby taller buildings. [end policy statement] Issues that the design standards should address include, but are not limited to, height, mass, scale, and architectural context. Taller buildings might be located in Neighborhood Centers or Mixed-Use Corridors, at the edges where they abut single-family neighborhoods. [end associated description]

This passage clearly identifies what the UPDC is seeking for this project.

This does not apply as the site is neither adjacent to single family homes nor is the proposed building "tall."

3.6 Encourage improvement of safety through design, as outlined in Design for Public Safety. [end policy statement] Design for Public Safety incorporates the principles of crime prevention through environmental design, to focus on strategies and techniques for the design of the physical environment, both of sites and buildings, which help reduce opportunities for crime (see Policy PR-1.7). [end associated description]

Transit-Oriented Development and Pedestrian-Oriented development can be synonymous.

It was determined during the site plan review process that there were no crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) issues.

3.15 Support the development of guidelines to incorporate public art in City financed capital projects and larger redevelopment efforts to imbue these projects with a distinct sense of place; provide for their maintenance. [end policy statement] Projects include infrastructure, buildings, and landscape and exclude projects that are below ground. The City should involve artists early in the planning and design of capital projects. [end associated description]

The Port Authority's involvement in this project should encourage the incorporation of public art or artistic elements.

This particular project is not a City-financed capital project; therefore the inclusion of public art will be at the discretion of the land or building owner.

3.16 Facilitate collaboration between artists and the community to identify opportunities for public art and to discuss civic issues that may inform the artist's work.

This is an over-arching policy goal and does not translate to a public artist being involved in all development proposals.

St Anthony has been identified as a Neighborhood Center by the City of St Paul.

1.11 Designate area as Neighborhood Centers [end policy statement]. Neighborhood Centers evolved as Saint Paul grew through the years. They all have an existing development pattern conducive to supporting a denser, mixed-use, pedestrian environment where commerce, employment, and amenities can be efficiently and effectively provided. Existing Neighborhood Centers are not all developed at the same level of intensity. Moreover, some existing Neighborhood Centers, such as Saint Anthony, are expected to have modest growth...

Saint Anthony has been designated as a Neighborhood Center. The description of a Neighborhood Center, however, is applicable to the Raymond and University area where there is a convergence of commerce, employment and amenities. The site is not consistent with the description of Neighborhood Centers.

1.12 Balance the following objectives for Neighborhood Centers through the density and scale of development: accommodating growth, supporting transit use and walking, providing a range of housing types, providing housing at densities that support transit, and providing open space and recreational opportunities. [end of policy statement] There can be gradations of density within individual Neighborhood Centers, with denser developments at the core and less dense developments at the periphery. [end of associated description]

The site in question is outside of the Neighborhood Center node shown on the map on page 4 of the Land Use Chapter. Therefore this policy does not apply.

1.13 Establish boundaries for Neighborhood Centers that reflect existing development patterns and functional characteristics of the area. [end of policy statement] The City should use these boundaries to guide development activity, monitor growth and other development conditions, and evaluate performance toward meeting objectives for services and community amenities. [end of associated description]

Boundaries for Neighborhood Centers have not been identified on a citywide basis. Any boundary identified in an adopted plan document does not encompass the property at 650 Pelham.

1.14 Plan for growth in Neighborhood Centers. [end of policy statement] The City should recognize community circumstances and preferences as stated in City adopted summaries of small area plans and district plans, while still providing additional housing opportunities at densities that support transit and walking.

As outlined above, the City should acknowledge the planning documents for the area and ensure that the intent of those plans be enacted.

The city ensures consistency with adopted plan document through the site plan review process. No adopted policy document made specific reference to this site or the surrounding industrial and commercial parcels.

1.15 Promote Neighborhood Centers as compact, mixed-use communities that provide services and employment close to residences. [end of policy statement] Mixed-use development combines three or more uses (e.g., residential, retail, office, recreation, etc.) into an integrated, pedestrian oriented real estate project that is served by transit. Whether the components of the project are within a building or in buildings that are in close proximity to each other, they are functionally integrated so that use of space is maximized. Some of the benefits of mixed-use are activating urban areas during more hours of the day, increasing housing options, reducing auto dependence, and creating a sense of place. [end of associated description]

The proposed development meets applicable zoning code standards and is not required to be a mixed use project.

1.18 Provide connections for bicycles and pedestrians to community facilities (e.g., parks, recreation centers, libraries, etc.) and to activities that support the residential population; and to adjacent areas of the city.

Pelham Blvd is a direct route to Desnoyer Park and the Town and Country Club.

The statement that Pelham Boulevard is a direct route to Desnoyer Park and the Town and Country Club is accurate. Pelham is also slated to become a link in the Grand Rounds Scenic Byway system with appropriate signage and markings. The developer of 650 Pelham will be providing a link in the sidewalk system in an area that is currently lacking good pedestrian connections.

1.27 Provide connections by bicycle and pedestrian facilities to adjacent areas.

Pelham is slated to become a link in the Grand Rounds Scenic Byway system with appropriate signage and markings. The developer of 650 Pelham will be providing a link in the sidewalk system in an area that is currently lacking good pedestrian connections.

Historic Preservation section of the St Paul Comprehensive Plan

Neighborhood Character

6.1. Determine the character-defining features of each neighborhood that should be preserved; incorporate these features into area plans and master plans for new development.

New development at 650 Pelham should be based on the historic Desnoyer Park neighborhood and the Raymond/University historic district.

Character-defining features from the Raymond/University Historic District and the Desnoyer Park neighborhood that could potentially carry over into other developments have not been identified. The property at 650 Pelham is not located within an historic district and is therefore not subject to the historic district guidelines.

6.5. Encourage City-funded projects to protect and enhance those neighborhood physical features that define an area's visual character and urban form.

Pelham Blvd has the potential to be an unprecedented development that enhances the aesthetics of all surrounding neighborhoods. By facilitating a development that transitions between the industrial nature of the area into a mixed-use corridor and residential border, the site can maximize it's full potential.

The project in question is not city-funded. Any future city-funded redevelopment of Pelham Boulevard will adhere to this policy.

Transportation

2.2 Support transit-oriented design through zoning and design guidelines. [end of policy statement]

Compact, street-oriented design should be emphasized to promote walkability and transit use, especially in commercial corridors. Standards for building placement and design based primarily on the needs of the pedestrian should be enforced and expanded. [end of associated description]

As referenced above, the design and placement of any building at 650 Pelham should be pedestrian focused and promote transit use.

The zoning and design guidelines applicable to development at 650 Pelham do not require the building to be at the street. Design requirements in Sec. 63.110 apply.

2.6 Focus on the improvement and extension of bus service and facilities on existing transit routes, and on new routes to serve proposed LRT stations in collaboration with Metro Transit.

2.6 c. Create better north-south connections to the Central Corridor and realign or extend existing routes where appropriate.

Pelham is the main north-south connection to the CCLR for Desnoyer Park residents.

This policy refers to bus routes.

2.12 Simplify and reduce off-street parking requirements and use definitions. [end of policy] To promote investment in existing and historic commercial buildings, the use of a baseline exemption should be explored, where buildings with smaller footprints are not required to provide parking. New off-street parking should be further reduced and restricted in close proximity to transit lines and in Downtown to support transit rider-ship. [end of associated description]

Parking requirements in the city have been greatly reduced through updates to the parking section of the code and through recent amendments to the traditional neighborhood districts. Off-street parking maximums have been adopted, which effectively limits excessive surface parking lots.

F. The Site Plan does not conform to standards incorporated in the Mississippi River Corridor Plan

Objective 6.3 in the Mississippi River Corridor Plan identified the priority to provide safe pedestrian and bike connections from surrounding neighborhoods to the corridor and to support the development and access to greater regional systems, such as the Greenway.

Pelham is a direct connection to the Mississippi River Blvd and the Mississippi River Corridor between St Anthony Park and Desnoyer Park. Development along Pelham should reflect the requirements set forth to enhance and promote the River Corridor.

This site is not located within the River Corridor. Development proposed at 650 Pelham is consistent with current zoning requirements. The development does not change the plan for Pelham Boulevard relative to pedestrian and bicycle connections into the River Corridor.

G. The Site Plan does not conform to standards incorporated in the West Midway Study recommendations.

-Surface parking shall not be located within 30 feet of the corner

-Buildings shall be located to emphasize and 'anchor' the corner

-Permit 25 spaces of required parking

-Maximum set back of 15 feet from lot line

-One shade tree per five parking spaces

-Buildings shall hold the corner and shall be oriented to the corner of both public streets.

The above West Midway Task Force standards clearly identify fundamental requirements for the site that are clearly not met in the current site plan.

No standards or changes to the zoning code have been adopted as a result of the West Midway Study because the study has not yet concluded.

2. The City of St Paul Municipal Code 63 outlines standards for building.

In the City of St Paul Municipal Code 63.110, requires buildings to hold the corners, or be built up to encourage access along both side of the property when at an intersection. The site plan as approved does not hold the corner, but is set by and surrounded by parking.

The requirement to hold the corner is in Section 63.110(c), which refers to pedestrian-oriented commercial districts. The referenced section does not apply.

3. There was no Community Design Process to resolve concerns with the project.

UPDC staff recognized the issues community members and the Land Use Committee were having with the project as proposed and at a public meeting, request that there be a Community Design Process for

the site to ensure the site plan to facilitate needed input from the community. With the extreme objections as evidenced in letters, public meetings, and communication with the developers from the communities, the site plan should not be approved based on the simple truth that the surrounding neighborhoods, using evidence from their community and city plans, do not believe that this project is the best development for the site. As a result of the approval of the site plan, all of the work that residents, city staff, consultants, and elected officials have undergone through the adoption of planning documents would be disregarded.

The site is one of unique interest for all parties. Located within a quarter-mile and 5-minute walk to the Raymond Station, and a billion dollar historic development of CCLRT, the community is using its only option, our planning documents, to guide a better development for the site. UPDC only wants to ensure that TOD and community standards are adhered to so that this will be a positive first development in this historic time.

A community design process is not a city requirement, although discussing project plans with the district council and addressing neighborhood concerns is an encouraged approach. The developer presented their plans to the Planning Commission and the District 12 Planning Council.

4. Zoning is not TN at the site

The I-1 zoning that is currently in effect is not in the best interest of the site, community, or central corridor. It may be considered spot zoning (or even “reverse spot zoning”) that the site was not rezoned to TN during the Central Corridor Overlay Zoning District process and planned to be improved into a mixed-use development through the City’s Comprehensive Plan. The site plan, if developed as is, would embody a minimal building that mirrors suburban style-development, instead of the urban village precedent the communities surrounding it are trying to establish.

Given that immediately north of the site has been zoned TN and that the neighborhood immediately south single-family home, and as it is on a north-south corridor of access for the Raymond Station and the CCLRT line, industrial zoning does not fit with the intent of all planning documents currently in effect for the site.

In fact, the project is yet speculative, as no tenants have been identified by the developer. UPDC considers the approval of site plan for this project to be completely inappropriate, in that it would effectively create a sub-standard precedent for development in the area, allow city-adopted planning documents to be disregarded and uninformed development to proceed, and facilitate a precedent for developer-oriented spot zoning, which is extremely disconcerting for a site that has been identified by the City of St. Paul as a major site for redevelopment in accordance to the CCLRT project.

The Central Corridor zoning changes were adopted by the Mayor and City Council. The City Council unanimously decided to leave this property zoned I1. Development scenarios shown in the CCDS and station area plans are long-term plans that acknowledge the need for incremental improvements and changes on the way to larger scale mixed use development. Because this use is permitted in the I-1 district, and the site plan meets the district standards, approving a site plan at this location is not considered spot zoning.

Conclusions

Failure of the City of St. Paul to designate the site as a Traditional Neighborhood zone was disappointing for the surrounding neighborhoods and an inadequate epitome for the future development of the area. However, absent the TN designation, this site plan falls far short of the spirit of the plans for the area and the basic needs of the neighborhood.

In light of this, we respectfully, but strongly request that the project and attendant site plan include the following conditions in conformance with the spirit and intent of any development of the site as envisioned in the St. Anthony Park Community Plan, Merriam Park Master Plan, Raymond Station Area Plan, Mississippi River Corridor Plan, Central Corridor Development Strategy, and City of St. Paul Comprehensive Plan:

- 1) Buildings should hold the corners at Pelham and Wabash; there should not be more than 15 feet between the sidewalk and any building
- 2) Sidewalks should be installed on both Pelham and Wabash
- 3) Buildings should have façade articulation consistent with the historic district at Pelham and University
- 4) Any parking spaces should be behind the building or underground to reduce pervious pavement and encourage the use of public transportation, especially the CCLRT
- 5) There should be at least two occupied stories on any building at the site
- 6) Windows adjacent to the streets should be prominent and perpetuate a storefront
- 7) Doorways should be located close to street and emphasized architecturally
- 8) Incorporate artistic elements reflective of the Creative Enterprise artists
- 9) Increased building density
- 10) Mixed commercial and industrial use at the site
- 11) Design any building at the site to facilitate and encourage the growth and expansion of our local industry and buildings. First opportunity for tenants at the site should be local businesses looking to expand. Confirm tenants for the building prior to construction.

For the reasons set forth in the staff response, there is no error sufficient to support the request for an appeal of the site plan at 650 Pelham Boulevard.

For all the reasons cited above, the Union Park District Council requests the Planning Commission of the City of Saint Paul to reverse the approval of Site Plan 10-906716 for the project at 650 Pelham Boulevard and mandate inclusion of the above stated conditions for the development of this site.

Respectfully submitted August 1, 2011

Glen R. McCluskey
President
Union Park District Council

MINUTES OF THE ZONING COMMITTEE
Thursday, August 25, 2011 - 3:30 p.m.
City Council Chambers, 3rd Floor
City Hall and Court House
15 West Kellogg Boulevard

PRESENT: Fernandez, Kramer, Merrigan, Nelson, Spaulding, Wencil, and Wickiser
EXCUSED: Commers
STAFF: Tom Beach, Samantha Langer, and Patricia James

The meeting was chaired by Commissioner Kramer.

Meridian Industrial Appeal - 11-260-156 - Appeal to PC by Union Park District Council of staff decision made on July 20, 2011 to approve the site plan at 650 Pelham Blvd.

Tom Beach presented the staff report with a recommendation of denial for the appeal of the Site Plan Review filed by Union Park District Council. Tom Beach also stated District 12 supported the appeal, and there were 6 letters in support of the appeal, and 3 letters in opposition of the appeal.

The appellant, Carla Olson, Union Park District Council, explained they feel that it is their responsibility to the community, as the District Council, to reach a positive solution and compromise with the Port Authority in the development at the Pelham site. They understand that the Port Authority has purchased the site, and appreciate that they cleaned up the site; however they are upset that the community wasn't included in the decision on what would be developed at the site. It is a suburban style development that isn't appropriate for the area, especially when the new light rail transit system will be so close and there is so much more potential to this location. It is very important to take this opportunity and develop this site to its full potential, and to avoid setting a precedent for other developers in the area. Ms. Olson stated neighbors and the District Council have been to numerous community meetings where their concerns were not addressed. They are very frustrated, and that is the reason for the appeal. She explained that they had believed that the design standards set forth in the Raymond Station Area Plan and the City Comprehensive Plan for the Central Corridor Overlay zone would be implemented by rezoning TN4. They are confused by the process of how this site remained zoned I1. The Port Authority should want to work closely with the citizens in the area on deciding what will be developed at this site.

The appellant, Annie Johnson, Union Park District Council, referred to zoning maps, and stated they were under the perception that the site was going to be zoned T4. They respect that it is currently zoned I1, but it could still have the spirit of T4, and the spirit of the surrounding neighborhood. The site, 650 Pelham, is within walking distance to the future Light Rail station, and close to the Desnoyer neighborhood. People from this neighborhood will use Pelham to get to University Avenue and the Light Rail, and therefore, you cannot dispute that this is a pedestrian corridor. This development does not meet what is explained in the Raymond Station Area Plan. There is huge potential of redevelopment, and they are excited that the Port Authority wants to redevelop, but they would like to see a better plan. Ms. Johnson stated that because of the proximity to Central Corridor, this site has so many possibilities, and this site plan doesn't meet its full potential. In conclusion, Ms. Johnson read a resolution (attached) from the Union Park District Council Land Use Committee in relation to the appeal.

Upon inquiry from the Commissioners, Ms. Johnson talked about the Comprehensive Plan map she referenced. She stated that the map was obtained from the West Midway Study from the City of Saint Paul's website. She stated that the West Midway Study has not been completed, and confirmed that the decision for the I1 zoning happened earlier this year. Ms. Johnson explained some of the things that the community would like to see at this site, such as bringing the corner of

the building closer to Pelham and Wabash, providing more windows, making the building two stories, and move the parking lot away from Pelham and Wabash. She explained there is a sidewalk along Pelham, and stated that there is no pedestrian connection on the north side by the Rock-Tenn facility.

John Schotz, 535 Glendale Street, Saint Paul, MN spoke in support of the appeal. Mr. Schotz stated he respects Mr. Beach and the City for trying to work with the neighborhood and the Port Authority to come to a compromise. Mr. Schotz stated he has been at every planning meeting since last fall, and has seen the Port Authority's presentation four times. He stated they try to describe the area as light industrial, and he doesn't believe this is an accurate description of the area. He has seen the bike and pedestrian traffic dramatically increase in the last four years. This proposed development will set the tone for what happens in this area, and it has so much more potential. Mr. Schotz stated the community is vehemently against this development, and the Port Authority isn't taking any of their concerns into consideration. He stated that the zoning for the property didn't happen through a community process. He believes the area isn't that industrial, and has a lot of potential for mixed use. Mr. Schotz wants to see Pelham Avenue safer for pedestrians and bicyclists. They should remove some of the parking spots and add a side walk to the north side by the railroad tracks. He read a letter against this development by Pat Tierney, a community member, which was not submitted.

Stephen Mastey, of the District 12 Community Council, 856 Raymond Avenue, Saint Paul, MN spoke in support of the appeal. Mr. Mastey supports 100% of what has already been stated. He is very disappointed with the Port Authority. They have ignored the concerns of the community regarding this development. There was already a business operating at the site that was acceptable to the community. He believes the Port Authority is overstepping their role, and are now subsidizing a new development which area residents and other businesses are not in favor. It is going to be hard to compete with a subsidized development, and it will negatively hurt the tax base. He explained this is an important connection to the Mississippi River and Central Corridor and the potential is being ignored. They would be losing a huge pedestrian and bike connection. Mr. Mastey stated that 260 parking spaces proposed for the development, which is not a dense use, is appalling when the building is so close to light rail. They don't want the additional traffic and impervious space. Aesthetically it isn't anything the Environmental or Land Use Committee would have envisioned for this site. It should embrace the streetscape, and be safer for pedestrians and bicyclists. Mr. Mastey also stated he wasn't aware of the city meetings pertaining to having this location remain zoned I1.

Commissioner Merrigan commented on the issue of the property remaining an I1 zoned parcel instead of being rezoned to TN4. This wasn't hidden from the public. She explained that the decision wasn't made lightly, and came from a Comprehensive Plan Committee recommendation, that went forward as part of the Central Corridor Overlay District rezoning, and the public was widely noticed. The meetings and public hearings happened over an extensive period of time and followed the traditional process of a rezoning.

Catherine Day, 2168 Sargent Avenue, Saint Paul, MN spoke in support of the appeal. She is speaking on behalf of the Creative Enterprise Zone, and has been an active volunteer in the neighborhood for fifteen years. She has helped develop Arts Off Raymond, and is now interested in adding mixed uses of creative work ideas into this area. Ms. Day stated the community needs more time to figure out the development of this area. She agrees with the comments made by the other speakers. She believes the most successful work they can do, would be in collaboration with everyone involved, and they need to come to a compromise. There is the potential for the site to

become a beacon, recognized nationally, showing that Saint Paul is in the business of producing not only jobs for today, but for tomorrow. Ms. Day stated they would like this to be a site that attracts new kinds of thinking and new kinds of people that will be part of producing jobs of the future. They would like to see the development more pedestrian friendly and have lower parking density. The Creative Enterprise would like this site to be known as a beacon stating this is where jobs and great ideas happen, and the proposed development doesn't signal this message.

Kari Canfield, President of the Midway Chamber of Commerce, spoke in opposition to the appeal. Ms. Canfield stated a letter that was submitted (attached) explains why they strongly support the project and she went over a few key points from the letter.

Upon questions from the Commissioners, Ms. Canfield explained that the Midway Chamber Board felt this use would be considered soft industrial and thought it was a good compromise for the I1 zoned area. This project would maintain the industrial heritage of the Midway area. There isn't much industrial zoned land with in Saint Paul, and it is important to keep industrial in the area because it provides jobs and revenue. Ms. Canfield stated there may be a better use of the land in the future, but the developer is ready to come in right now, and they support the idea of getting jobs into the area as soon as possible. She stated that developing the site to create jobs now this is the best option.

Lorrie Louder, Director of Business and Intergovernmental Affairs, Saint Paul Port Authority, spoke in opposition of the appeal. Ms. Louder stated she also serves on the West Midway Industrial Study Group, and wanted to explain that the Midway Industrial Study has not been completed and the task force working on the study is currently on hiatus until January. She also stated that they believe strongly in input from everyone and have been in discussions with Creative Enterprise Zone and District 12 and Union Park District Council. She explained some of the other sites the Port Authority has developed or is currently working on. Ms. Louder explained that the Port Authority did listen to suggestions of the community and incorporated many of them into the plan. Ms. Louder referenced a handout (attached) showing landscaping and other features that had been added to the site plan to address community concerns.

At inquiry of the Commissioners, Ms. Louder explained we need to continue to redevelop the industrial land that remains in Saint Paul. The jobs created are very important to the City of Saint Paul. She stated that this use is absolutely and unequivocally the best site design for this property. The market is demanding this kind of development. The site plan including the parking located in the front is a perfect design. She confirmed that they are anticipating a multi-tenant building, but that is subject to change. There could be up to five businesses located at the site. The spaces in the building will be leased to the tenants. Ms. Louder explained they thought it would be a good idea to have enough parking for each of the tenants as well as visitors. Putting all of the parking spaces in the back would be dangerous because that area will be an active truck delivery zone. The developer worked very hard on the site plan and landscaping was added to buffer the parking. The purpose of the parking located on the east side of the property is additional employee and visitor parking. This type of parking is located at other Port Authority properties. Ms. Louder explained they have done there best in working with the community and stated light industrial entities are critically important for Saint Paul.

John Allan, owner of Industrial Equities, 321 1st Avenue N., Minneapolis, MN spoke in opposition of the appeal. Mr. Allan stated Industrial Equities has a very good reputation. They are sought out to join communities because they are long term investors, and less than 5% of their portfolio has ever been sold. They build high quality products that address the needs of the marketplace. He

explained that he personally manages the properties. He stated it is a well known fact that they get higher rents for their properties across the metropolitan area. This is the right development for this site, and the parking lot layout is what the marketplace dictates. He knows what needs to be done, and how it needs to be designed, and there is great demand in the Midway area. He stated he will be able to bring in high quality tenants and he is certain there will be more than sixty eight jobs at the site. He also clarified that there are 198 parking spaces and he is paying a significant amount for the land, and underwriting a lot of soil correction costs.

Upon inquiry from the Commissioners, Mr. Allan stated he has developed almost one million feet of space in Roseville, New Brighton, Minneapolis and the downtown area of Burnsville. Mr. Allan explained that parking spaces create opportunities for attracting tenants and he doesn't want to reduce the number of spaces. He wants to build a project that can handle higher density uses. He stated they are well within the measures of the zoning code in the area. Mr. Allan explained they didn't add a sidewalk along Wabash because of the railroad tracks and it would compromise safety. Mr. Allan is open to the idea of incorporating art into the site plan. He wants this to be a good neighborhood experience and wants to work with the community.

Annie Johnson replied that this is not the right project in its current site plan. They want to attract good development and businesses and this site plan discourages that. They want the good jobs, but the site plan isn't reflective of transit oriented development.

The public hearing was closed.

Commissioner Bob Spaulding moved denial of the appeal of the Site Plan Review. The site plan is approved with the additional conditions:

1. An additional pedestrian connection from the public sidewalk on Pelham to the southwest corner of the building must be constructed.
2. A public sidewalk must be provided on the south side of Wabash if City staff determines that it is possible to provide both street trees and a sidewalk that is consistent with pedestrian safety in light of the existing nearby railroad track.

Commissioner Paula Merrigan seconded the motion.

The motion passed by a vote of 5-0-0.

Adopted Yeas - 5 Nays - 0 Abstained - 0

Drafted by: Submitted by: Approved by:

Samantha Langer
Recording Secretary

Tom Beach
Zoning Section

Richard Kramer
Chair