

ZONING COMMITTEE STAFF REPORT

1. **FILE NAME:** *Victoria Park Master Plan* Major Modification **FILE #** 11-239-001
2. **APPLICANT:** City of Saint Paul PED **HEARING DATE:** June 30, 2011
3. **TYPE OF APPLICATION:** Major Modification of a T3M Master Plan
4. **LOCATION:** Victoria Park Urban Village, generally bounded by W. 7th Street, Otto Avenue, Shepard Road and Montreal Street
5. **PIN & LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** See file
6. **PLANNING DISTRICT:** 9 **PRESENT ZONING:** I3
7. **ZONING CODE REFERENCE:** §66.345(c)(2)
8. **STAFF REPORT DATE:** June 21, 2011 **BY:** Lucy Thompson
9. **DATE RECEIVED:** June 8, 2011 **60-DAY DEADLINE FOR ACTION:** August 7, 2011

- A. **PURPOSE:** Major modification of the *Victoria Park Master Plan*
- B. **PARCEL SIZE:** 2,337,619 square feet (53.6 acres)
- C. **EXISTING LAND USE:** Vacant
- D. **SURROUNDING LAND USE:**
 - North: Commercial (Mississippi Market)
 - East: Multi-family residential and graduated care facility (Sholom)
 - South: Mississippi River
 - West: Crosby Lake Business Center (office/industrial park)
- E. **ZONING CODE CITATION:** §66.345(c)(2) allows for major modifications to an approved T3 master plan, defines what constitutes a major modification, and specifies the amendment process.
- F. **HISTORY/DISCUSSION:** The *Victoria Park Master Plan* was first adopted in April 2005, concurrent with rezoning of approximately half of the urban village to T3M. In April 2007, a minor plan modification was approved by the Planning Administrator.
- G. **DISTRICT COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION:** The District 9 Council has not taken a position on the proposed master plan modification as of the date of this staff report.
- H. **FINDINGS:**
 1. The *Victoria Park Master Plan* was first adopted by the Saint Paul City Council in April 2005, along with rezoning approximately half of the Victoria Park Urban Village to T3M. The *Victoria Park Master Plan* lays out a vision of a pedestrian-friendly, transit-oriented community that provides a range of housing choices and prices; a new neighborhood park; a system of connected neighborhood streets for bicycles, pedestrians and cars; and an improved connection to the Mississippi River.
 2. Rezoning of the remaining half of the urban village to T3M was delayed pending resolution of a lawsuit filed by the then-owner, Exxon Mobil. The lawsuit was settled in 2009, and the subsequent settlement restricts future use of the formerly-Exxon land to park purposes only. The Master Plan, however, shows the formerly-Exxon land developed with a range of housing types and a small central green.
 3. Sec. 66.344(c) notes that major modifications to an approved master plan may be initiated by the City Council, Planning Commission, or any person having an ownership or leasehold interest in property that is the subject of the proposed modification. Major modifications are defined as changes of 10% or more in land area designated in a specific category; creation of a new public street or removal of a public street segment; removal of a park or open space area; or addition or removal of an entire block. Major modifications may be approved by City Council resolution following Planning Commission review, public hearing and recommendation.
 4. Based on the land use restrictions for the formerly-Exxon land, which will allow only park use of the approximately 37 acres, as well as a proposal by Nova Academy to build a

charter school across the street from the new park, major modifications to the *Victoria Park Master Plan* are required:

- a. a change in future land use from residential to park, including the removal of several streets that had been master-planned (but not built) to serve proposed residential development (Exxon settlement);
- b. a change in future land use from residential to institutional (Nova Academy); and
- c. removal of a one-block segment of Mercer Street and a one-block segment of Madson Street that had been master-planned (but not built) to serve proposed residential development (Nova Academy).

5. In addition, staff is recommending some minor text changes to explain and support the evolution of the urban village over time, as the realities of a market downturn and legal settlement play out.
6. These master plan modifications are being advanced at the same time as, but separately from, an application to rezone the undeveloped half of the Victoria Park Urban Village from I3 to T3M. By recommendation of the City Attorney's Office, the rezoning and master plan modifications are proceeding concurrently.
7. The proposed modifications are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The Land Use chapter contains the following relevant strategies (Victoria Park is identified as a proposed Neighborhood Center, and W. 7th is identified as a Mixed-Use Corridor):
 - 1.2 Permit high-density residential development in Neighborhood Centers, Mixed-Use Corridors, the Central Corridor and Downtown.
 - 1.14 Plan for growth in Neighborhood Centers.
 - 1.17 Promote a place, amenity or activity that serves as a community focus and emphasizes the special identity of individual Neighborhood Centers.
 - 1.23 Guide development along Mixed-Use Corridors.
 - 1.24 Support a mix of uses on Mixed-Use Corridors.

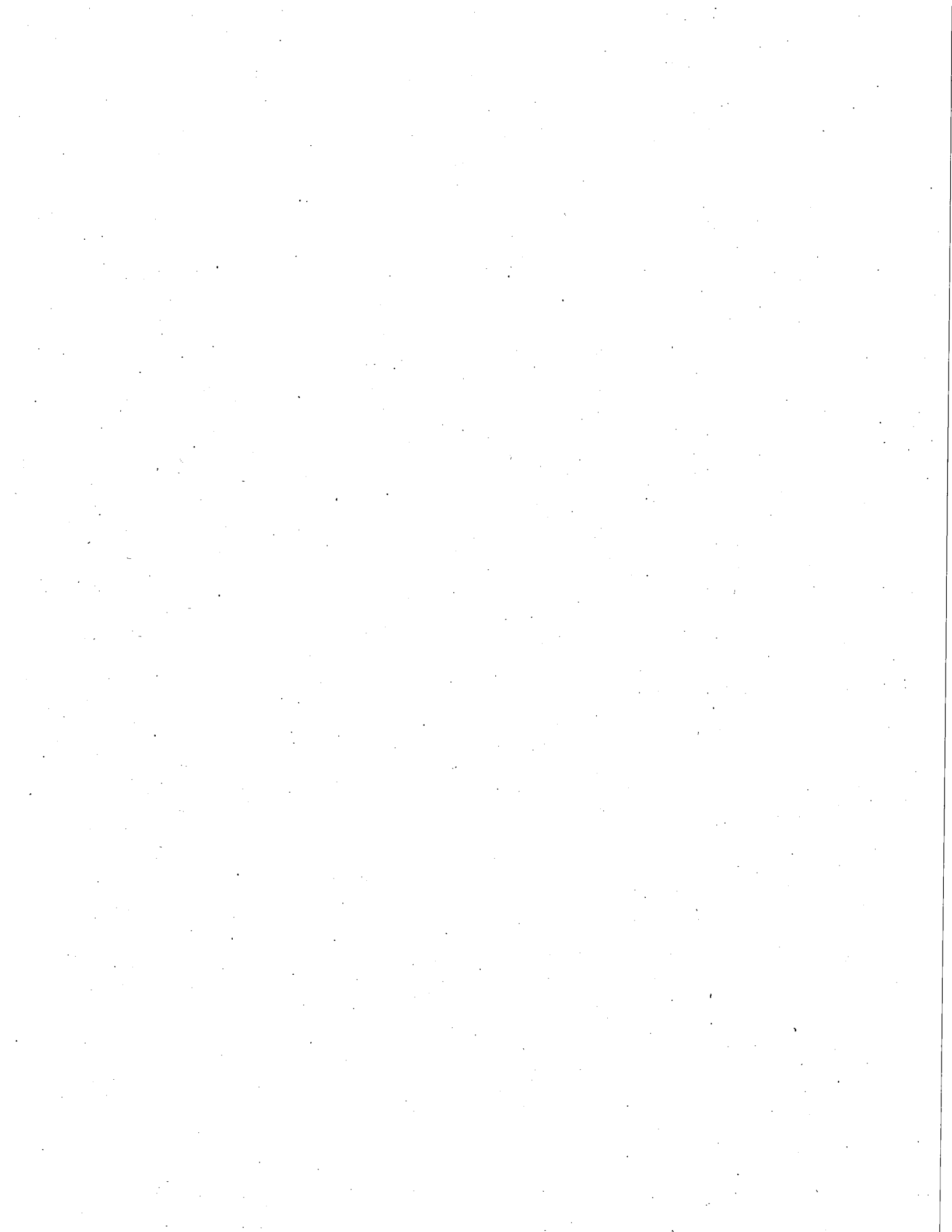
The Parks and Recreation chapter contains the following relevant strategies:

- 2.2 Ensure attractive, functional and engaging four-season public spaces.
 - 2.4 Design parks and facilities for appropriate community gathering or festival opportunities based on park location, size and function.
 - 4.4 Provide activities and programming for alternative, emerging recreation trends, particularly those that meet the recreational needs of youth.
8. The proposed modifications are consistent with the core design and planning principles of the *Victoria Park Master Plan*, including providing a central public green as an important gathering place for the neighborhood, and maintaining access to the Mississippi River and Sam Morgan Regional Trail.
 9. The proposed modifications are consistent with development in the rest of the Victoria Park Urban Village and other adjacent parcels. The proposed park will serve residential development in both the urban village and the larger neighborhood. The charter school is an appropriate addition to the land use mix in the Victoria Park Urban Village.
 10. The proposed modifications are consistent with the intent of the T3 Traditional Neighborhood district, including a mix of residential, commercial, civic and open space uses in close proximity to one another; a system of interconnected streets and paths; and a system of open space resources and amenities.

I. **STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Based on the above findings, staff recommends approval of the following major modifications to the Victoria Park Master Plan (see attached for revised text and plates):

1. a change in future land use from residential to park, including the removal of several streets that had been master-planned (but not built) to serve proposed residential development (Exxon settlement);

2. a change in future land use from residential to institutional (Nova Academy);
3. removal of a one-block segment of Mercer Street and a one-block segment of Madson Street that had been master-planned (but not built) to serve proposed residential development (Nova Academy); and
4. minor text changes to explain and support the evolution of the urban village over time.






CITY OF SAINT PAUL
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DATE: June 9, 2011
TO: Donna Drummond, Planning Director
FROM: Lucy Thompson, Principal City Planner 
SUBJECT: Request for Major Modifications to the *Victoria Park Master Plan*

BACKGROUND

The *Victoria Park Master Plan* was first adopted by the Saint Paul City Council in April 2005, along with rezoning approximately half of the Victoria Park Urban Village to T3M. The *Victoria Park Master Plan* lays out a vision of a pedestrian-friendly, transit-oriented community that provides a range of housing choices and prices; a new neighborhood park; a system of connected neighborhood streets for bicycles, pedestrians and cars; and an improved connection to the Mississippi River. Rezoning of the other half of the urban village to T3M was anticipated once the Saint Paul Housing and Redevelopment Authority owned the land; this transaction was delayed due to a lawsuit filed by the then-owner, Exxon Mobil. The lawsuit was settled in 2009, and restricts future use of the formerly-Exxon land to park purposes only. The Master Plan, however, shows the formerly-Exxon land developed with a range of housing types and a small central green.

Sec. 66.344(c) notes that major modifications to an approved master plan may be initiated by the City Council, Planning Commission, or any person having an ownership or leasehold interest in property that is the subject of the proposed modification. Major modifications are defined as changes of 10% or more in land area designated in a specific category; creation of a new public street or removal of a public street segment; removal of a park or open space area; or addition or removal of an entire block. Major modifications may be approved by City Council resolution following Planning Commission review, public hearing and recommendation.

PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS

Based on the land use restrictions for the formerly-Exxon land, which will allow only park use of the approximately 37 acres, as well as a proposal by Nova Academy to build a charter school across the street from the new park, significant changes to the *Victoria Park Master Plan* are required:

1. a change in future land use from residential to park, including the removal of several streets that had been master-planned (but not built) to serve proposed residential development (Exxon settlement);
2. a change in future land use from residential to institutional (Nova Academy); and

Donna Drummond
Page Two
June 9, 2011

3. removal of a one-block segment of Mercer Street and a one-block segment of Madson Street that had been master-planned (but not built) to serve proposed residential development (Nova Academy).

In addition, staff is recommending some minor text changes to explain the evolution of the urban village over time, as the realities of a market downturn and legal settlement play out. These master plan modifications are being advanced at the same time as, but separately from, a rezoning application to rezone the other half of the Victoria Park Urban Village from I3 to T3M. By recommendation of the City Attorney's Office, the rezoning and master plan modifications should proceed concurrently. The Planning Commission will hold two hearings on the same day, but two staff reports will be prepared.

I am attaching the proposed revised *Victoria Park Master Plan* to illustrate the changes noted above.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission refer the proposed major modifications to the *Victoria Park Master Plan* to the Zoning Committee for a public hearing concurrent with its public hearing on the application to rezone the remaining half of the Victoria Park Urban Village from I3 to T3M.

Attachment