

May 1, 2025

St Paul City Council  
15 West Kellogg Boulevard  
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Subject: Objection to Reestablishment of Non-Conforming Business Use at 237 Richmond St  
Zoning Case # 25-025-204

Dear Members of City Council,

We, the neighbors of 237 Richmond Street, have been closely following the zoning case for this property and were very disappointed with the Planning Commission's decision, in spite of strong neighbor opposition, to allow the reestablishment of a nonconforming use permit for a "service business with workshop." We would like to call to your attention several compelling reasons why granting this business a nonconforming use permit would be a detriment to the neighborhood and go against the city's comprehensive plan.

Under **Section 62.109** in part (e), the city code lays out five requirements for reestablishing a nonconforming use permit and we would like to note conditions (2) through (5) are not being met:

*(2) The proposed use is equally appropriate or more appropriate to the district than the previous legal nonconforming use.*

The previous nonconforming use was an auto repair shop, which serviced the cars of many neighborhood residents. There was a direct relationship with the neighborhood and the business provided a necessary service to residents. The proposed use is a contractor workshop/storage facility that does not serve the neighborhood or its residents. Thus, the proposed use is less appropriate to the district than the previous nonconforming use.

*(3) The proposed use will not be detrimental to the existing character of development in the immediate neighborhood or endanger the public health, safety, or general welfare.*

The proposed use detracts from the surrounding neighborhood character, which is primarily residential. Contractor trucks and trailers coming and going from the property give the neighborhood an industrial flavor, which is detrimental to the quality of life for those living in close proximity to the property.

*(4) The proposed use is consistent with the comprehensive plan.*

When this property was rezoned to T1 as a part of the District 9 plan in 2011, the auto repair business (Magic's) was granted a nonconforming use permit with the intention that, when sold, the property would be returned to a use more appropriate for T1, such as residential or a neighborhood-serving, pedestrian-oriented business. The property was sold in the summer of 2023 and, after operating without a permit, the new owner is

seeking to use the property as a contractor workshop/storage facility, which is not in line with this vision for the neighborhood nor is it in line with the intention of the T1 zoning.

*(5) A notarized petition of at least two-thirds of the owners of the described parcels of real estate within one hundred (100) feet of the subject property has been submitted stating their support for the use.*

We, the neighbors, are not in support of the proposed use and have not been asked to sign a petition about the proposed use of the property, which is different from the previous nonconforming use.

Additionally, granting a nonconforming use permit for this business would go against the comprehensive plan policies, including:

***Policy LU-31. Invest in Neighborhood Nodes to achieve development that enables people to meet their daily needs within walking distance and improves equitable access to amenities, retail and services.***

The proposed business for 237 Richmond does not enable people to meet their daily needs within walking distance nor does it improve equitable access to amenities, retail and services. The proposed business does not have a storefront or a way to engage with the public; it is merely a storage facility.



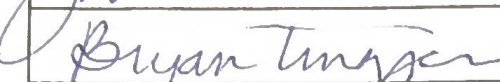





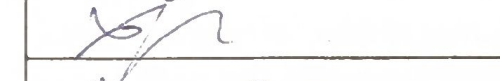






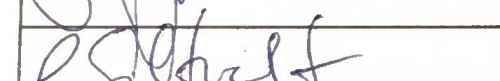

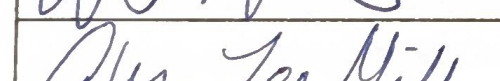



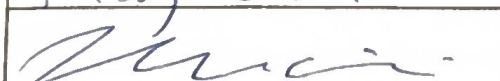




***Policy LU-36. Promote neighborhood serving commercial businesses within Urban Neighborhoods that are compatible with the character and scale of the existing residential development.***

As mentioned above, the proposed business is not neighborhood-serving and the type of traffic generated by the business detracts from the character of the surrounding residential development.

We thank you for your time and consideration of the above points and strongly urge you to overturn the Planning Commission's decision and deny the request for a nonconforming use permit for 237 Richmond Street.

Sincerely,

The Neighbors of 237 Richmond Street  
Attachment: signatures of neighbors

Signature	Name (print)	Address (Optional)
	Dan Berinborst	
	PAT FEARING	439 ST CLAIR
	Jacqueline Tinajero	452 St. Clair Ave
	Bryan Tinajero	452 St. Clair Ave
	Aaron Hyers	234 Colborne
	Deann Hyers	
	Kim Hyers	
	Malissa Pachizaca Baran	
	Ethan Hyers	
	Sydney Hyers	
	Arthur T. Dake	401 Michigan
	Joyce Seal	
	Mara Cambo	454 Michigan St.
	Derran Tobelt	212 Colborne St
	Sarah Bauer	202 Colborne St
	Quinn Combs	454 Michigan St
	Jennifer Ybarra	766 SAINT CLAIR
	Rebekah Soltvedt	466 St. Clair Ave
	Amanda Preisinger	211 Colborne St.
	Abra Gillman	427 Michigan St.
	Brian Pierce	447 St Clair ave
	Susanne Pierce	447 St Clair Ave
	Meg Duhur	223 Colborne St.
	Naomi Blumie	223 Colborne St.
	Eric Swanberg	217 Richmond St.
	Anna Swanberg	217 Richmond St