

**CITY OF SAINT PAUL**

Christopher B. Coleman, Mayor

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**DATE:** February 24, 2011

**TO:** Mayor Chris Coleman  
Council President Lantry and Members of the Saint Paul City Council

**FROM:** Jon Commers, Chair, Saint Paul Planning Commission

**SUBJECT:** Highland Village Zoning Study

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**BACKGROUND**

For many years the Highland Business Association (HBA), the Highland District Council (the District Council), business leaders and community members have worked to make Highland Village one of the most successful commercial districts in Saint Paul. The commercial area and spaces that have evolved over these years are a collage of varying building and development styles. This organic growth has served Highland Village well.

Highland Village is now looking to its future and considering the pattern and mix of uses that might be most appropriate as continued development and redevelopment occur. The predominant B2 and B3 zoning currently in place for most of the Highland Village commercial area supports a range of service and retail uses in an variety of building and lot patterns. There is interest in considering whether TN2 zoning in the area might provide for a wider range of mixed uses, as well as a stronger development and design framework that promotes a more traditional "main street" pattern.

In January 2010, the Saint Paul Planning Commission received a formal request from the Highland Park District Council to initiate a zoning study of the Highland Village Commercial Corridor to bring zoning into compliance with neighborhood plans and the community's vision for the future of Highland Village. This formal request came after the District Council engaged property owners facing Cleveland Avenue and Ford Parkway, the Highland Business Association, and other district residents to gain community consensus around studying the appropriate zoning. The District Council specifically asked the Commission to explore rezoning most of the commercial areas from B2 Community Business and B3 General Business to TN2 Traditional Neighborhood within designated boundaries.

In August 2010, the Planning Commission initiated the Highland Village Zoning Study for the area generally defined as Ford Parkway from Mississippi River Boulevard to Howell Street, and Cleveland Avenue from Hillcrest Avenue to Randolph Avenue.

### **THE HIGHLAND VILLAGE ZONING STUDY**

The District 15 Council conducted outreach in preparation of the Highland Village Zoning Study in order to gain consensus on carrying out the study and to discuss the potential outcomes of such a study. After study initiation, PED staff worked with the District 15 Community Development Committee and the Highland Business Association on conducting meetings with district council members, community members and affected property owners regarding the zoning study and preliminary findings.

Draft recommendations were presented in several community settings before being finalized. The Community Development Committee and District 15 Council discussed the recommendations with one another and community members at the meetings. In addition, staff hosted a property owners-only meeting with affected owners in the study area. The meetings succeeded in providing information about the study and preliminary findings, and in eliciting feedback which was used to further refine the recommendations.

On January 22, 2011, the Saint Paul Planning Commission held a public hearing on the Highland Village Zoning Study and proposed rezoning of properties. A report on the study and proposed parcel rezoning information was presented to the Planning Commission in December 2010 and made publicly available through legal notice, mailings to all property owners in the study area, and on the City's website. Three people testified at the hearing, a property owner, representative of the Highland Business Association, and a representative of the Highland Park District Council which also submitted a comment letter. All testimony supported the study and the proposed property rezonings for Highland Village.

The full report on the zoning study and recommended parcels for rezoning is attached. Its key conclusions and recommendations are:

1. TN2 is the appropriate zoning for most of the Highland Village Study Area to bring it into general compliance with neighborhood plans and the Comprehensive Plan.
2. Allowing B2 zoning for three parcels (two businesses) in the study area that are currently used for auto specialty stores is appropriate for maintaining conforming use status for those businesses and reflects the general wishes of the community.
3. Medium-density residential land uses at the edge of the district (much of the northern portion of Cleveland Avenue and the eastern most portion of Ford Parkway) are appropriately zoned RM2, and no change in zoning is recommended.

4. 621 Cleveland, currently zoned OS, should be rezoned to RM2. This parcel is currently “spot zoned” within a block that is zoned RM2. Rezoning would allow for a cohesive development pattern, while allowing the existing office use to remain as a non-conforming use. Office uses are permitted elsewhere in the Highland Village area and are not necessary to maintain as a long-term use on this single parcel.
5. 58 (~ 70%) of the parcels should be rezoned to TN2, as shown in the summary chart below.

| Existing Zoning | Proposed Zoning | # of Parcels (%) |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| B2              | TN2             | 42 (52%)         |
| B2/VP/R4        | TN2/VP/R4       | 1 (1%)           |
| B3              | TN2             | 4 (5%)           |
| RM2             | TN2             | 5 (6%)           |
| R4              | TN2             | 2 (2%)           |
| OS              | TN2             | 2 (2%)           |
| I1              | TN2             | 2 (2%)           |
| I1              | B2              | 2 (2%)           |
| OS              | RM2             | 1 (1%)           |
| B2              | B2              | 1 (1%)           |
| RM2             | RM2             | 22 (26%)         |

**PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION AND RECOMMENDATION**

On February 18, 2011, the Planning Commission adopted a resolution recommending that the City Council approve the rezoning recommendations contained in the *Highland Village Zoning Study Report and Recommendations*, dated February 2011. The City Council public hearing has been scheduled for April 6, 2011.

Attachment:

Highland Village Zoning Study Report and Recommendations

c:

Councilmember Patrick Harris, Ward 3

Cecile Bedor, PED

Donna Drummond, PED

Kathy Carruth, Highland Park District Council

Shawn Bartsh, Highland Business Association