



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
Christopher B. Coleman, Mayor

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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

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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