



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
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DATE: December 12, 2013

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Neighborhood Planning Committee

RE: Review of proposed text amendment initiated by Resolution 13-1906, amending the Zoning Code text regarding source-separated organics (Secs. 60.220 and 65.331)

ISSUE

Councilmember Russ Stark introduced Resolution 13-1906 on December 4, 2013, requesting the Planning Commission's study, report, and recommendation within 60 days regarding a proposed amendment of Zoning Code Secs. 60.220 and 65.331. The amendment would create a definition for "source-separated organics" and would allow collection and transfer of source-separated organics at municipal yard waste sites. Source-separated organic waste includes non-recyclable paper and food scraps, such as banana peels, coffee grounds, and uneaten food, which could include fruits, vegetables, meats, grains, or dairy.

The proposed text amendment has been referred to the Planning Commission for review, report, and recommendation as required by Minnesota Statutes 462.357, Subd. 4. Please see the memo attachments for a copy of the resolution.

BACKGROUND

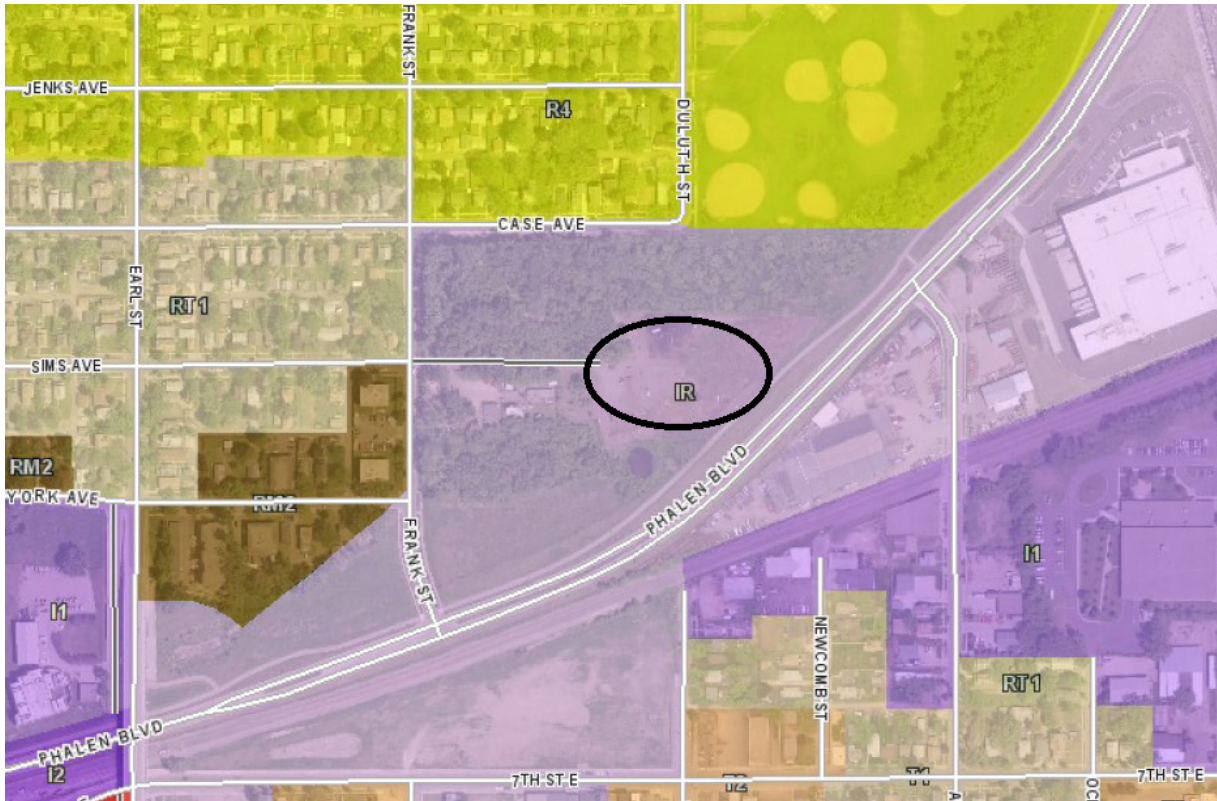
The City of Saint Paul has committed to increasing the city's organic waste recovery rate, consistent with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's goal for the region of increasing the rate from 4% in 2010 to 9-15% by 2030. This would present several benefits, including reduced future landfill space requirements and greater amounts of publicly available compost for landscaping or garden use. In the longer term, the City plans to study and potentially implement curbside or alleyway pickup of source-separated organics. However, the most practical short-term approach for increasing the organic waste recovery rate is to allow the organic material to be collected at the existing Ramsey County yard waste sites for transfer to organic composting facilities outside the city. Thus, the City Council has requested that a Zoning Code amendment be studied that would allow such organics collection at the yard waste sites. Currently, the Zoning Code permits only yard waste at these sites.

Saint Paul has four (4) yard waste sites that would be affected by this Zoning Code amendment, all of them owned and operated by Ramsey County. The sites are located at 389 Winthrop Street

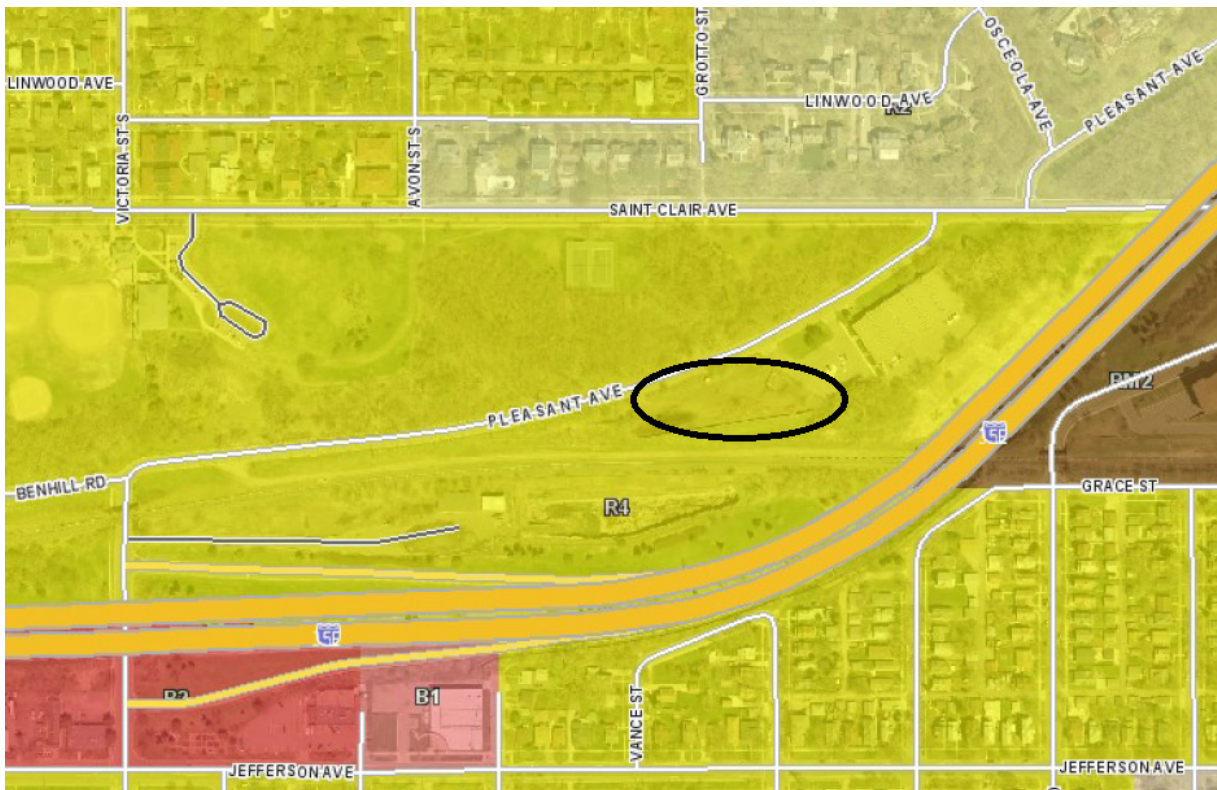
(“Battle Creek” site), 1150 Sims Avenue (“Frank & Sims” site), 1943 Pierce Butler Route (“Midway” site), and 870 Pleasant Avenue (“Summit Hill” site). Maps of each follow below.



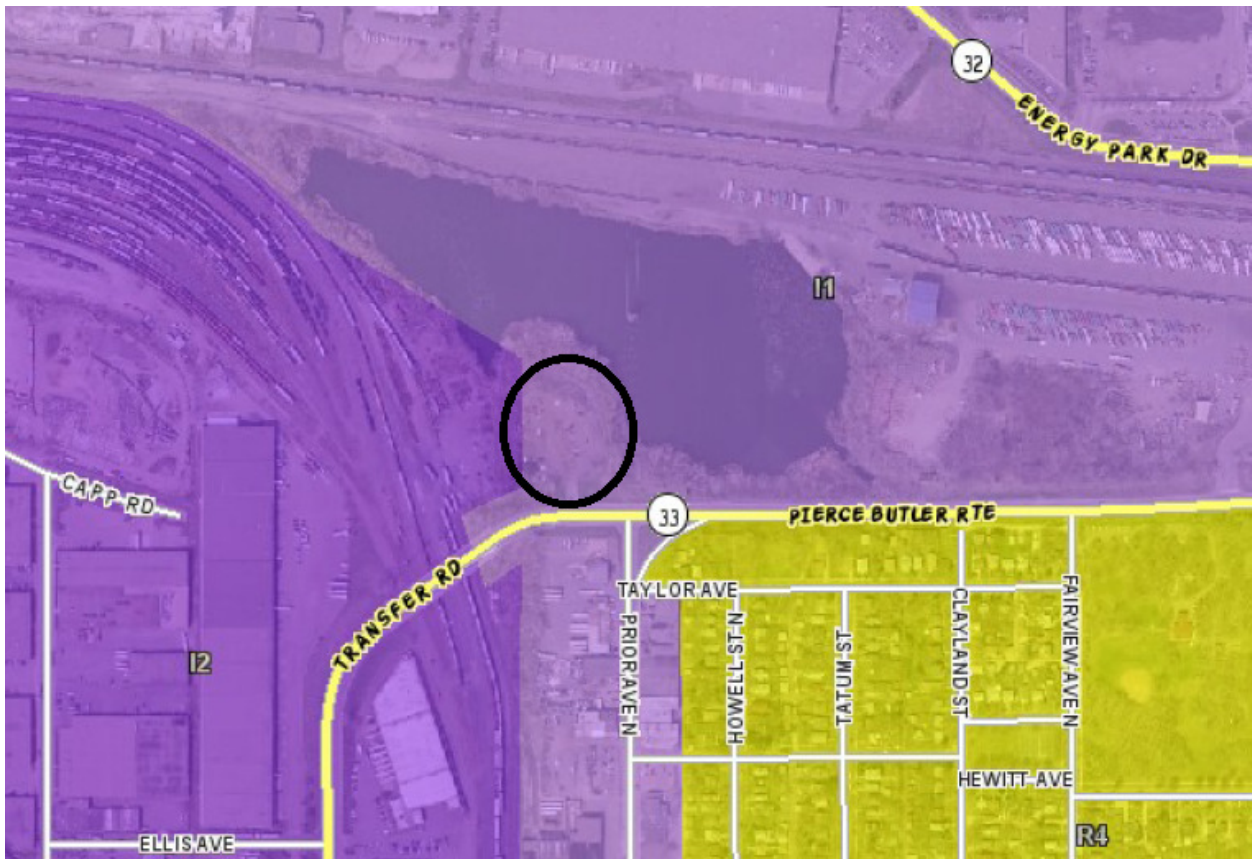
Battle Creek site (in circle)



Frank & Sims site



Summit Hill site



Midway site

Ramsey County currently accepts residential yard waste such as leaves, grass, pumpkins, garden wastes, and non-woody plants at all four (4) sites, as well as branches, trees, and shrubs at the Frank & Sims and Midway sites. The yard waste is composted or mulched on-site and made available to residents in the spring.

Of the Ramsey County sites, Battle Creek and Summit Hill conform with zoning regulations and would continue to conform if source-separated organics collection and transfer were added as an accessory use. Though current regulations would require Conditional Use Permit (CUP) approvals at Battle Creek and Summit Hill, the sites were legally established before the CUP requirement was enacted. The Midway and Frank & Sims sites would require modifications to their previous CUP approvals (through new CUP applications) in order to allow source-separated organics collection and transfer. The Frank & Sims site was rezoned in 2006 from I1 Light Industrial District to IR (now known as IT Transitional Industrial District), which does not permit yard waste sites. However, the existing CUP conditions may be modified. Additionally, Zoning Code Sec. 62.106(q) specifically allows expansion for of existing yard waste sites in IT through the CUP process.

ANALYSIS

The Comprehensive Plan includes the theme of Environmental Sustainability. The proposed text amendment furthers that theme by providing for a practical option to reduce the amount of residentially generated organic waste ending up in landfills.

Meanwhile, the proposed text amendment does not contradict any Comprehensive Plan goals relating to protection of neighborhoods. Traffic generation is expected to be similar to existing yard waste site traffic. Of greater concern is controlling potential negative externalities such as odor or vermin, which can sometimes result from food waste. This concern is mitigated by the proposal to limit the use to collection and transfer of source-separated organics, with all composting occurring at off-site facilities. Furthermore, the requirement to keep the source-separated organics in closed, leak proof containers that are removed regularly is expected to effectively control such negative effects and differentiate it from an open air solid waste facility. Also, limiting the users to residents, rather than institutions or businesses, will keep the source-separated organics quantities to manageable levels.

NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

The NPC recommends approval of the proposed amendments to Secs. 60.220 and 65.331, which would allow for source-separated organics collection and transfer at municipal yard waste sites.

Attachments

1. City Council Resolution 13-1906
2. Draft Planning Commission Resolution