



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
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June 13, 2017

To: Saint Paul Planning Commission

From: Comprehensive/Neighborhood Planning Committee

Re: Snelling Avenue South 40-Acre Zoning Study

BACKGROUND

The Snelling Avenue South Zoning Study was initiated by action of the Saint Paul Planning Commission in July of 2015. On April 7, 2017, the Planning Commission released the study's findings and recommendations for public review and comment. The Planning Commission held a public hearing on the study on May 19, 2017, and the record was kept open for written comment until May 26, 2017. On June 13, the combined Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning Committees reviewed public comments on the study. This memorandum summarizes the testimony received during the hearing and public comment period, summarizes the study's findings and recommendations for zoning changes, and provides the rationale for the modifications incorporated into the final recommendations by the committees. The March 29 memorandum from the Neighborhood Planning Committee to the full Planning Commission, which provides the findings and draft recommendations from the study that were reviewed at the public hearing, is attached to this memo. The maps that were included with the draft findings and recommendations are also attached, and have been modified to reflect the final recommendations from the committees.

SUMMARY of FINDINGS and RECOMMENDATIONS

The zoning study analyzed current land uses and zoning along Snelling Avenue from Interstate 94 to Ford Parkway and within approximately one-quarter mile of intersections with other arterial roads. The study's primary recommendation is broad adoption of traditional neighborhood zoning districts. Areas proposed for rezoning are primarily currently zoned for multifamily or commercial uses, but also include some parcels fronting on Snelling Avenue that are currently zoned for single family use. Single-family zoned properties within the study area but not fronting Snelling Avenue are generally not recommended for rezoning. The conversion to traditional neighborhood zoning from the current mix of multifamily and commercial designations confers several advantages. Traditional neighborhood districts allow for a range of

both commercial and residential uses in a single district, allowing more flexibility in development and encouraging the finer-grained mixing of uses seen in traditional urban form. Traditional neighborhood districts also include design standards which result in more transit- and pedestrian-friendly development. The net impact of the proposed changes on potential density of development is moderate, although traditional neighborhood district dimensional standards do allow for greater density than in the equivalent commercial and residential districts (e.g., T2 versus B2 and RM2). Lastly, while limited up-zoning of some single-family residential parcels near A Line BRT stations was considered—to allow for moderate density development such as duplexes in areas with good access to transit—this strategy is not suggested in these recommendations.

PUBLIC COMMENTS and ANALYSIS

The three district councils that the study area intersects all provided comments in support of the study recommendations. The letter provided by the Macalester-Groveland Community Council (MGCC) explicitly recommends that the City better define “mixed use” as it pertains to development in traditional neighborhood districts. The MGCC letter also notes a number of policies in the MGCC community plan as important considerations in arriving at a recommendation on the zoning study.

A large number of comments received in support of the zoning study recommendations used identical language, urging adoption of the proposed zoning changes without modification, and stating that the study’s recommendations would encourage growth in the Snelling Avenue corridor that would:

- Not overly impact existing neighborhoods or infrastructure
- Allow new residents to take advantage of living in a desirable community in Saint Paul
- Bring more people to existing businesses and expand opportunities for new commercial development
- Promote existing transportation options and support the expansion of transit services

Additional areas of support identified in support of the study recommendations included:

- Support for higher density housing and commercial uses along Snelling Avenue
- Support for higher density as a way to support transit and neighborhood businesses

Comments critical of or in opposition to the study recommendations were more varied in nature. However, several common concerns were expressed:

- Opposition to buildings of 5 or more stories, or of 60-70 feet
- Opposition to large buildings and/or density more generally
- Concerns over increased traffic congestion, parking demands, and negative impacts to pedestrian safety
- Concern that increased density will lead to more crime

- Concern regarding resulting loss of access to sunlight and/or privacy for adjacent homeowners
- Concern that zoning changes/development will devalue nearby single-family homes
- Concern about changes in neighborhood character

Some less common but more specific concerns were also found in the comments received, including citing of Comprehensive Plan and neighborhood plan policies. These included:

- Statements that proposed rezonings are inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan strategy to “preserve and promote Established Neighborhoods” because they will negatively impact adjacent properties that are within Established Neighborhoods and/or because Snelling Avenue should be considered part of these neighborhoods
- T traditional neighborhood zoning lacks necessary controls on “building footprint” and minimum lot size and is not well understood by many people
- T traditional neighborhood zoning is not conducive to the type of mixed-use development it is purported to promote
- Traffic noise, both existing and potential increases

Finally, commenters requested several specific modifications to the proposed zoning changes:

- Retaining the current R4 zoning for the parcels on the east side of Snelling at Lincoln and Goodrich, rather than the proposed change to T2
- T2 zoning for the parcels on the east side of Snelling between St. Clair and Stanford, with some support for T3 “at the corner” (the majority of the block is currently proposed for rezoning from B2 to T3).

The comments on the study, taken as a whole, suggest several broad themes:

Support for Design Standards

Both those in support of the zoning study recommendations and those in opposition talked about the importance of walkability and pedestrian-friendliness. This is consistent with the study recommendations for the adoption of T traditional neighborhood districts. The properties identified for T traditional neighborhood zoning in the study almost all front arterial or collector streets, and the traditional neighborhood design standards require that buildings orient toward the front of lots, both in terms of placement of building mass and requirements for a pedestrian-friendly interface with the public realm. While the site plan and conditional use permit applications submitted by LeCesse Corporation for the proposed development at St. Clair and Snelling are a separate matter from the zoning study, it is notable that the basis for rejection of those applications by the Planning Commission centered around the inconsistency of the proposal with those same design standards. However, it is also notable that while the applications were denied by the Planning Commission, there was significant discussion at both the Zoning Committee and the full Planning Commission over whether the proposed

development did or did not comply with the design standards. There may be room for refinement of these standards.

Commercial Vitality

There was also broad consensus among commenters that maintaining and growing commercial vitality in the Snelling Avenue corridor is very important. This was coupled with desire a definition of “mixed-use”. Further study of how to both protect and promote commercial vitality, and how commercial versus residential developments are evaluated under the zoning code should be considered.

Pedestrian Safety

Although it is not an issue directly germane to the zoning study, the issue of pedestrian safety was brought up by many commenters. Some commenters suggested that additional traffic associated with higher density redevelopment could exacerbate these problems. Theoretically, a better pedestrian realm and support for transit should increase pedestrian safety.

Density and Height are Key Areas of Disagreement

The primary area of disagreement between supporters and opponents of the study recommendations could be characterized in a few questions: How much density is too much density, and how tall is too tall?

Concern over how neighboring land uses will interact with new uses is, as one commenter pointed out, at the core of zoning decisions. The challenge in Saint Paul, and along portions of the Snelling Avenue corridor in particular, is finding a way to achieve the City’s stated goal of accommodating higher-density development along what is designated as a Mixed-Use Corridor while still assuring there are appropriate transitions to less-intensive uses and development patterns in the neighborhoods that flank the corridor. T traditional neighborhood zoning has several features which make them a good fit for striking this balance. Where T traditional neighborhood districts abut RL-RT2 districts (single-family and duplex zoning), allowed heights are reduced at property lines to 25 feet. Increased height is allowed as distance from rear and side property lines increases. The impact of this is to push the mass of buildings toward the front of a development lot, typically along an arterial or collector street.

T traditional neighborhood districts do allow greater density as measured by floor area ratio compared to the corresponding commercial and residential districts (for example, T2 vs. B2 vs. RM2) and allow for increased potential heights, particularly in T3 with a conditional use permit. In comments received, the concerns over height and density, and the resulting potential impacts on shade, privacy, traffic, and parking were centered on two locations, as noted above. In addition to recommending further study of T traditional neighborhood traditional neighborhood design standards, two amendments to the recommended zoning were considered.

Location One: East side of Snelling, between Lincoln and Goodrich (Immanuel Lutheran Church)

- Draft Recommendation: all parcels R4 to T2
- Alternative Recommendation: all parcels R4 to T1

This change would have reduced the number and intensity of potential future uses of the property, addressing concerns that the changes will incentivize redevelopment of the property and that future development will adversely impact adjacent residential properties. The committee determined that the proposed use of T2 at this location was appropriate, and consistent with how the zoning designation is used elsewhere, and confirmed the draft recommendation.

Location Two: East side of Snelling, between St. Clair and Stanford

- Current Recommendation: all parcels B2 to T3, except for southernmost parcel to T2
- Alternative Recommendation: T3 for northernmost two parcels, T2 for remainder of block

This change would reduce the number and intensity of potential future uses of the property, addressing concerns that the changes will incentivize redevelopment of the property and that future development will adversely impact adjacent residential properties. The committees determined that the alternative recommendation is appropriate and in keeping with the use of the T3 and T2 districts elsewhere.

The committees also made two additional modifications to the draft recommendations, as follows:

- Rezone 68 Snelling Ave South from B2 to T3. (The draft recommendation is for T2.) This parcel, along with 64 Snelling S and 58 Snelling Avenue S are all owned by Lincoln Commons Ltd. The study generally recommends zoning continuous parcels that are owned by a single entity to the same zoning designation in order to avoid split zoning for possible future redevelopment sites.
- Rezone the northern 11 ft. of 498 Brimhall from B2 to R4. 498 Brimhall is currently split zoned R4/B2. The property is a single family dwelling and the majority of the parcel is zoned R4 single family. If the parcel remains split zoned any future development north of the parcel on 1540 Brimhall could be built at a higher height at the setback line abutting 498 Brimhall because the provision that limits the height to 25' when T traditional neighborhood districts abut RL – RT2 would not apply.

RECOMMENDATION

The combined Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning Committees recommend that the Planning Commission forward the Snelling Avenue South Zoning Study, which consists of this memorandum, the attached maps, and the March 29 memorandum from the Neighborhood

Planning Committee to the Planning Commission, to the Mayor and City Council with a recommendation to adopt all zoning changes as proposed therein.

Snelling and Dayton - Existing



Zoning

- R3 One-Family
- R4 One-Family
- RT1 Two-Family
- RT2 Townhouse
- RM1 Multiple-Family
- RM2 Multiple-Family
- T1 Traditional Neighborhood
- T2 Traditional Neighborhood
- T3 Traditional Neighborhood
- OS Office-Service
- B1 Local Business
- BC Community Business (converted)
- B2 Community Business
- B3 General Business
- IT Transitional Industrial
- I1 Light Industrial
- VP Vehicular Parking
- Buildings
- BRT Station

0 0.25 Miles



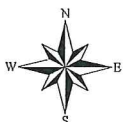
Snelling and Dayton - Proposed Changes



Zoning

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0 0.25 Miles



Snelling and Dayton - After



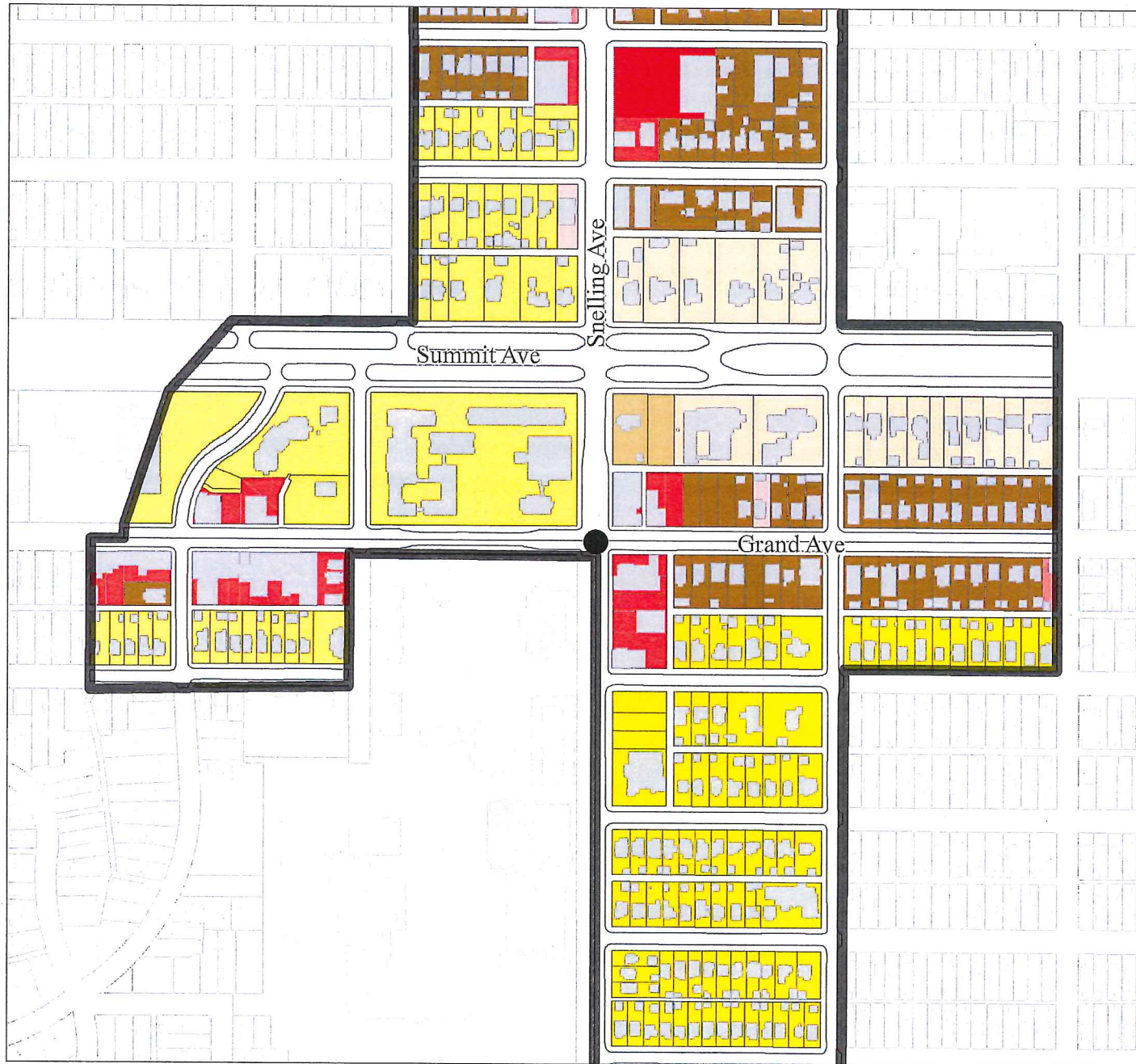
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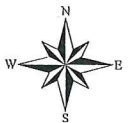
Snelling and Grand - Existing



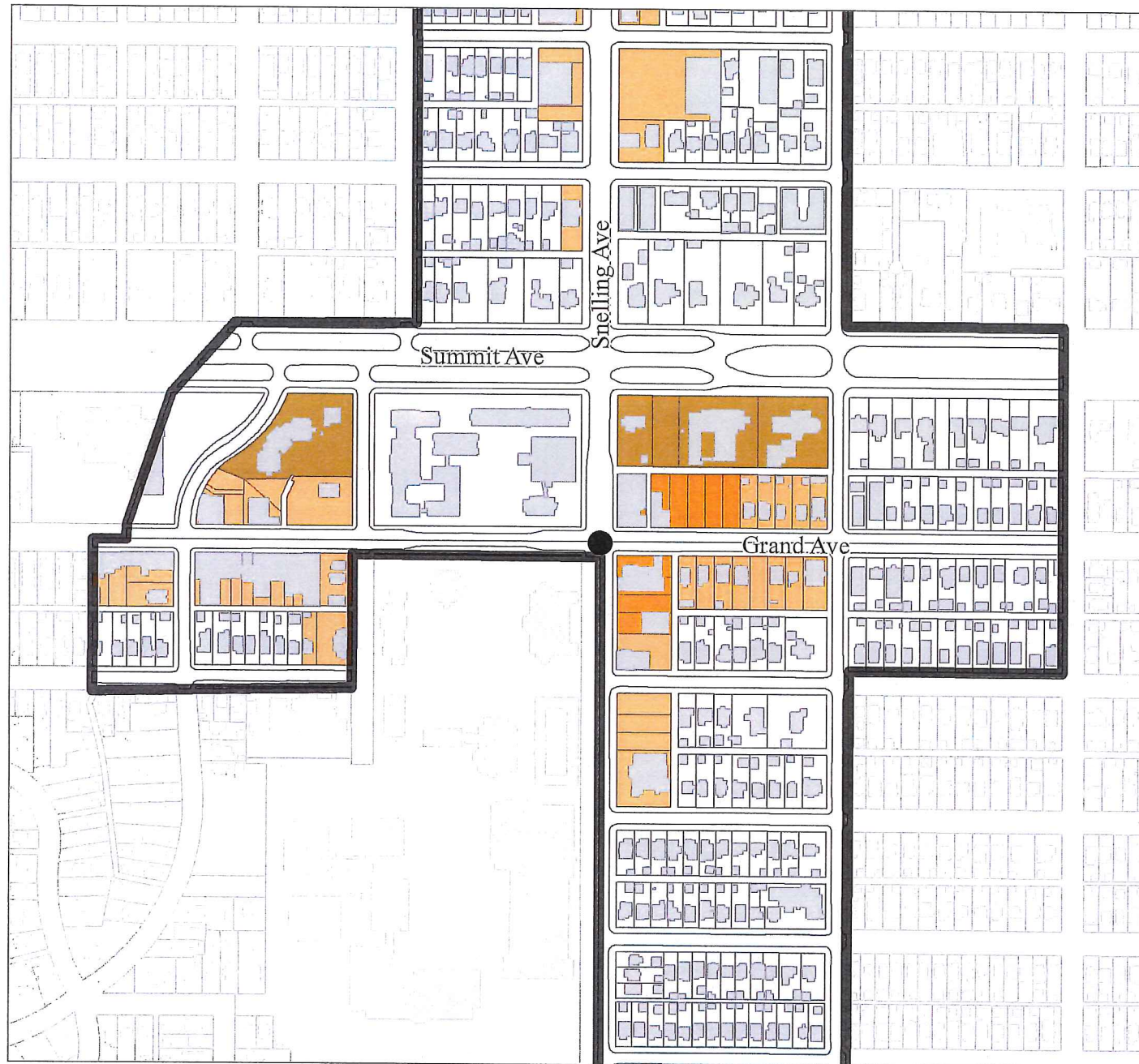
Zoning

- R3 One-Family
- R4 One-Family
- RT1 Two-Family
- RT2 Townhouse
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- RM2 Multiple-Family
- T1 Traditional Neighborhood
- T2 Traditional Neighborhood
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0 0.25 Miles



Snelling and Grand - Proposed Changes



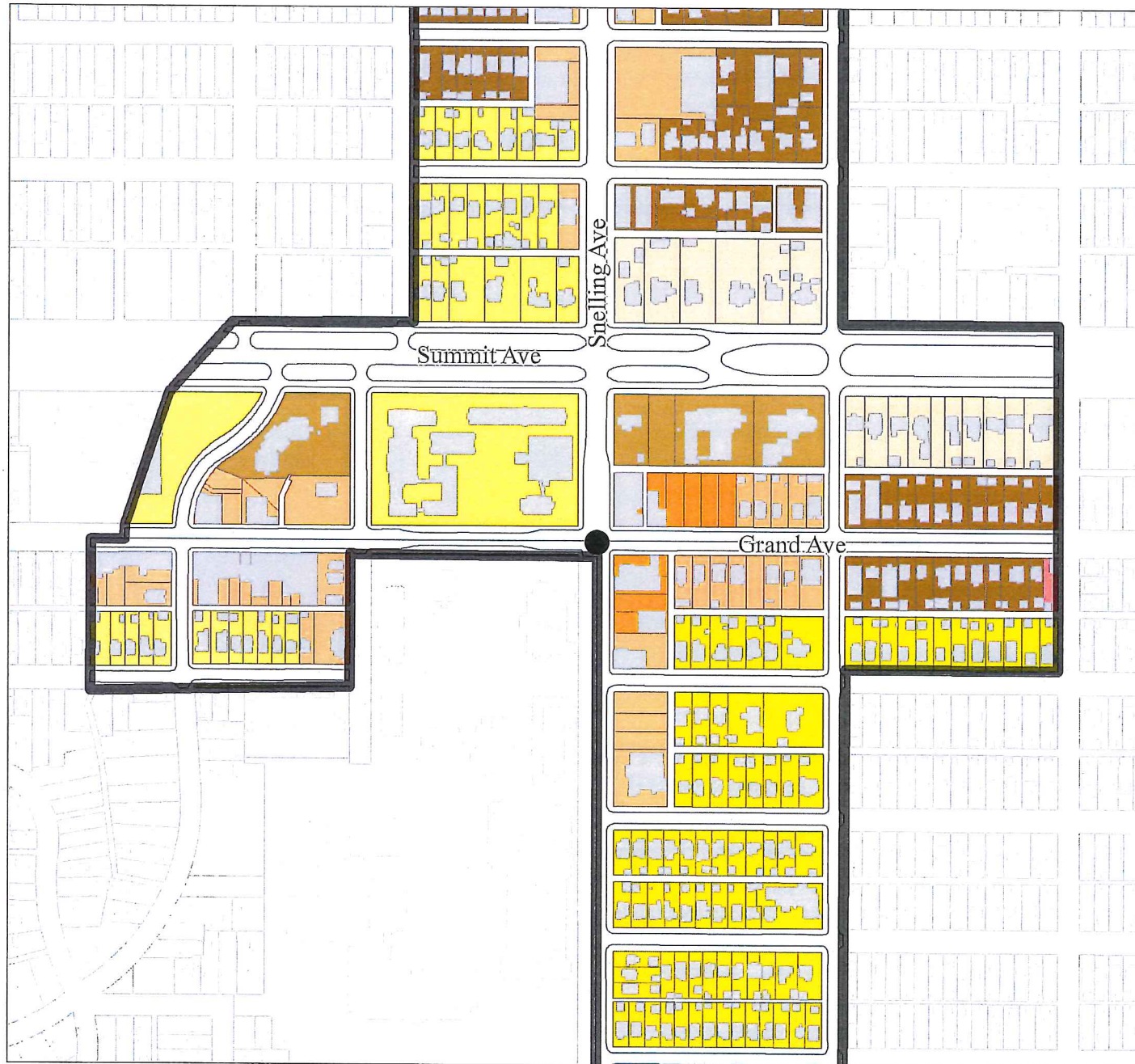
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Snelling and Grand - After



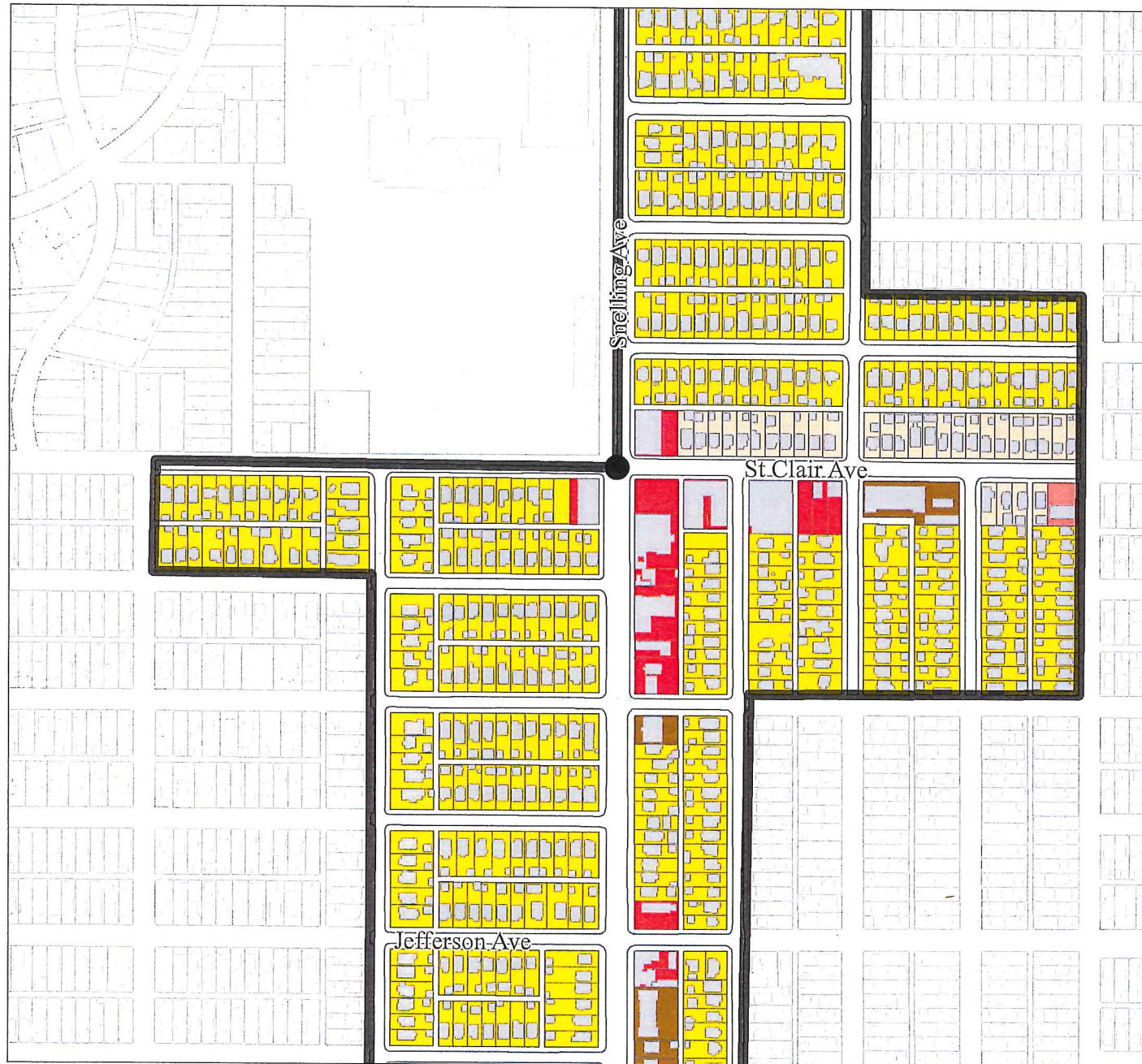
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Snelling and St Clair - Existing



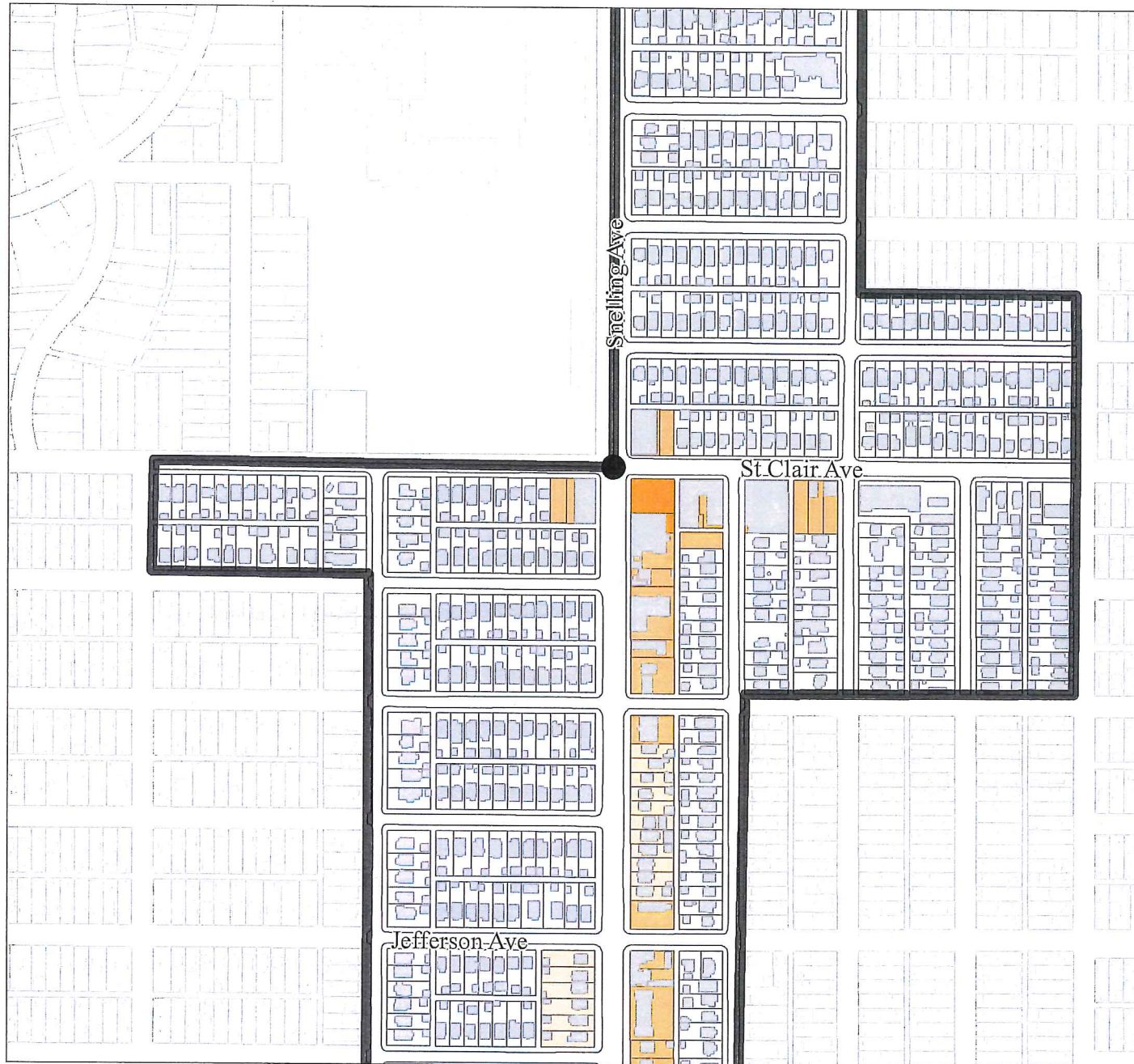
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0 0.25 Miles



Snelling and St Clair - Proposed Changes



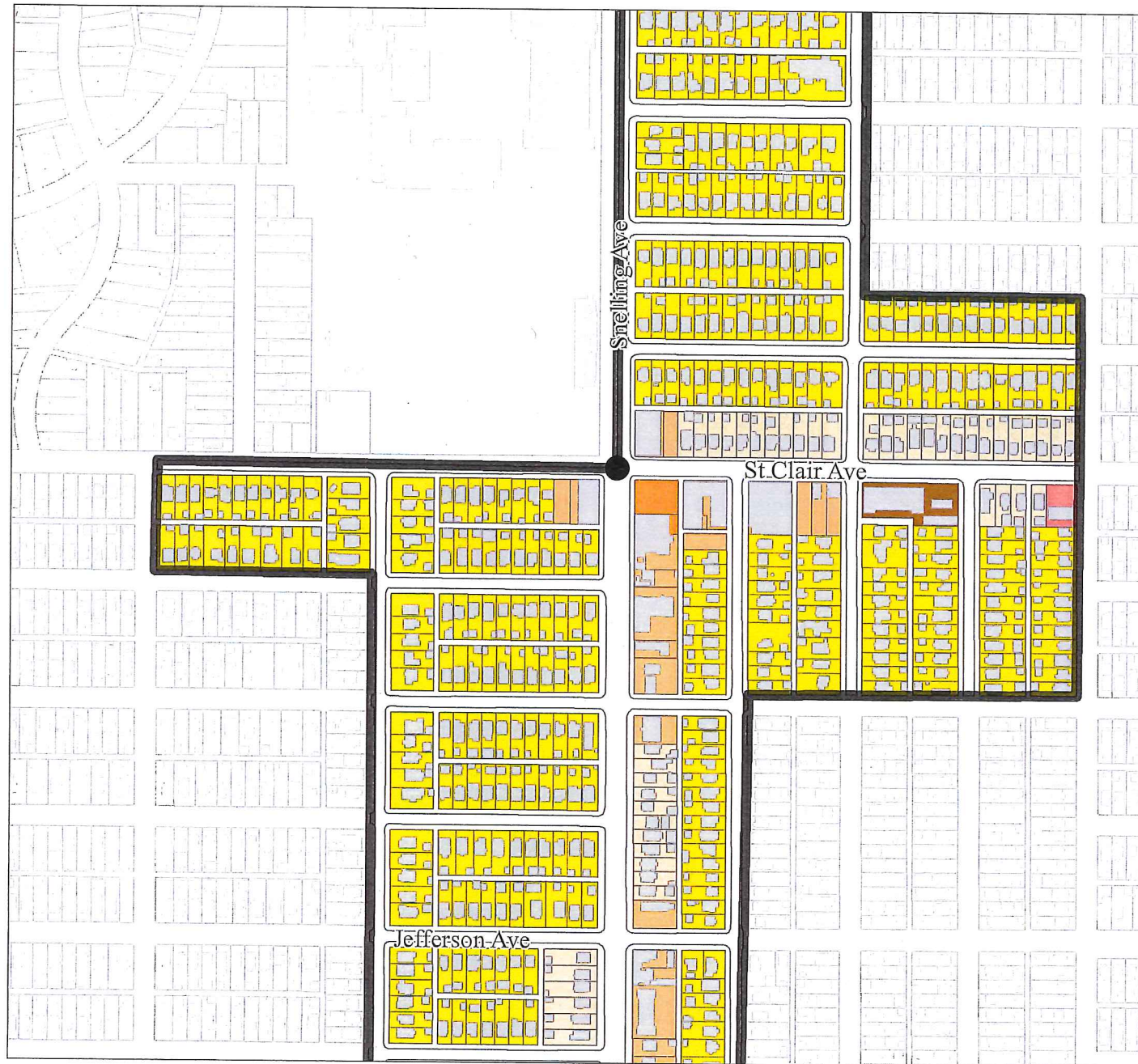
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Snelling and St Clair - After



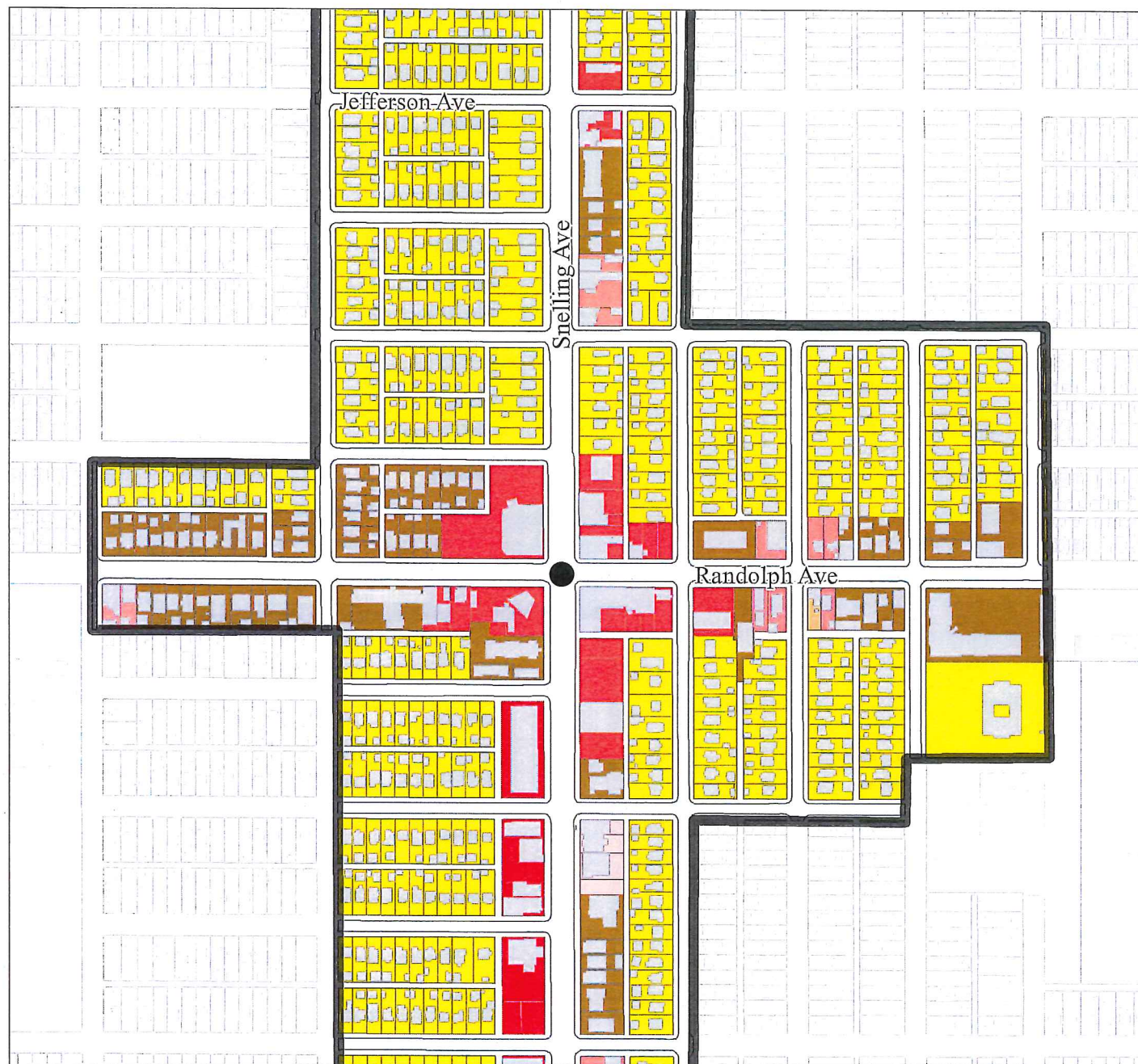
Zoning

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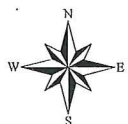
Snelling and Randolph - Existing



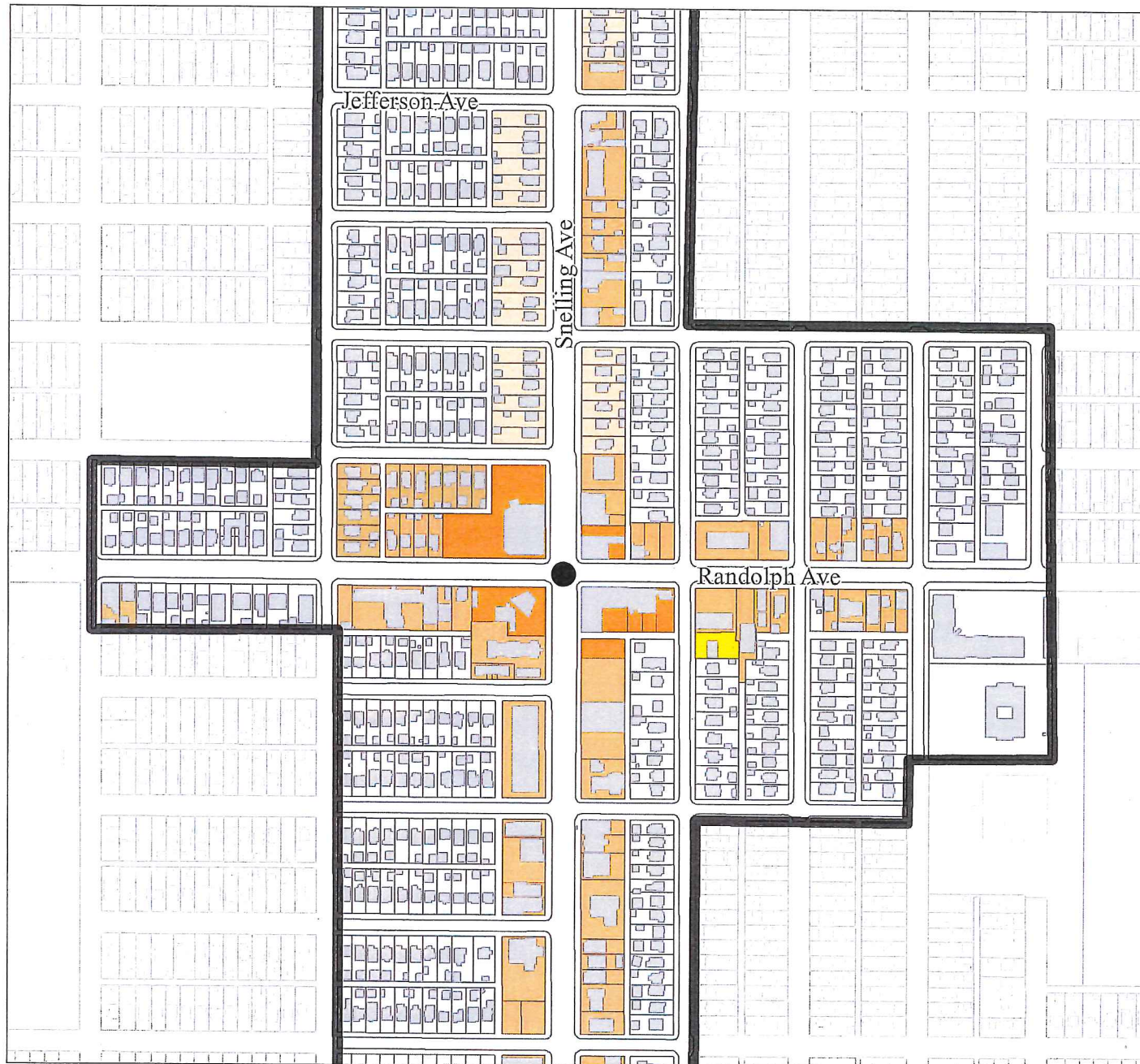
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0 0.25 Miles



Snelling and Randolph - Proposed Changes



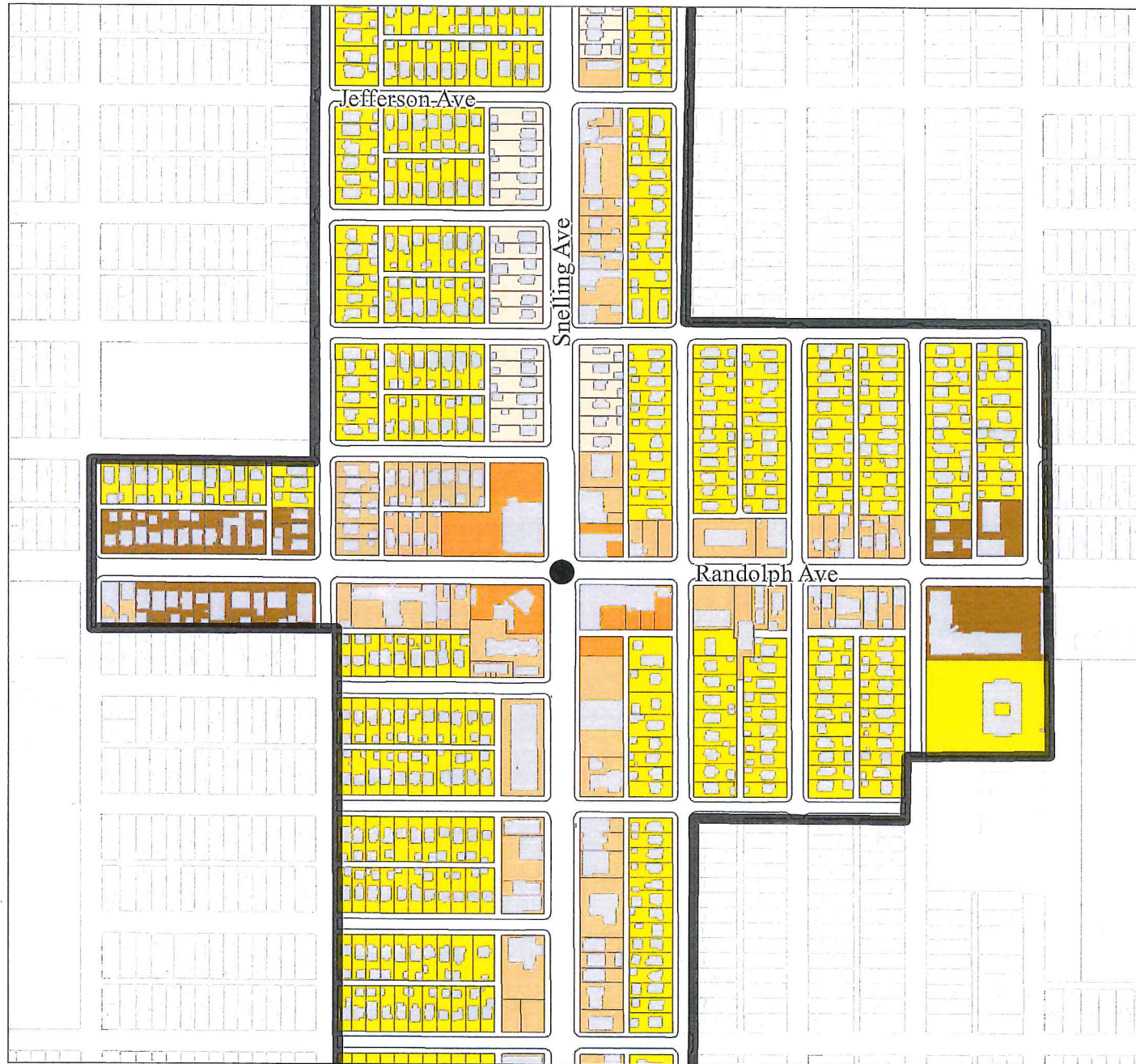
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Snelling and Randolph - After



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Snelling and Highland Pkwy - Existing



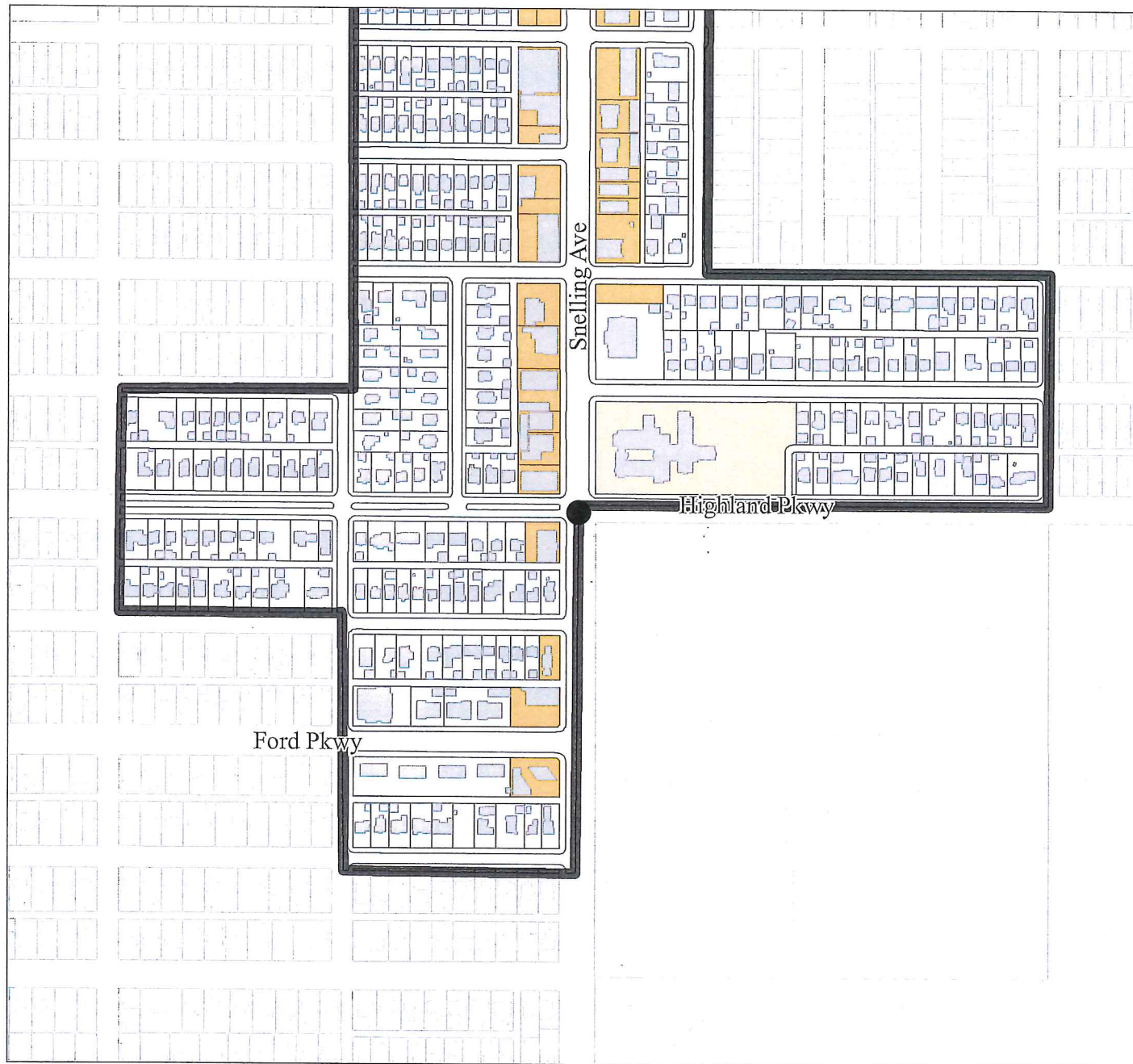
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Snelling and Highland Pkwy - Proposed Changes



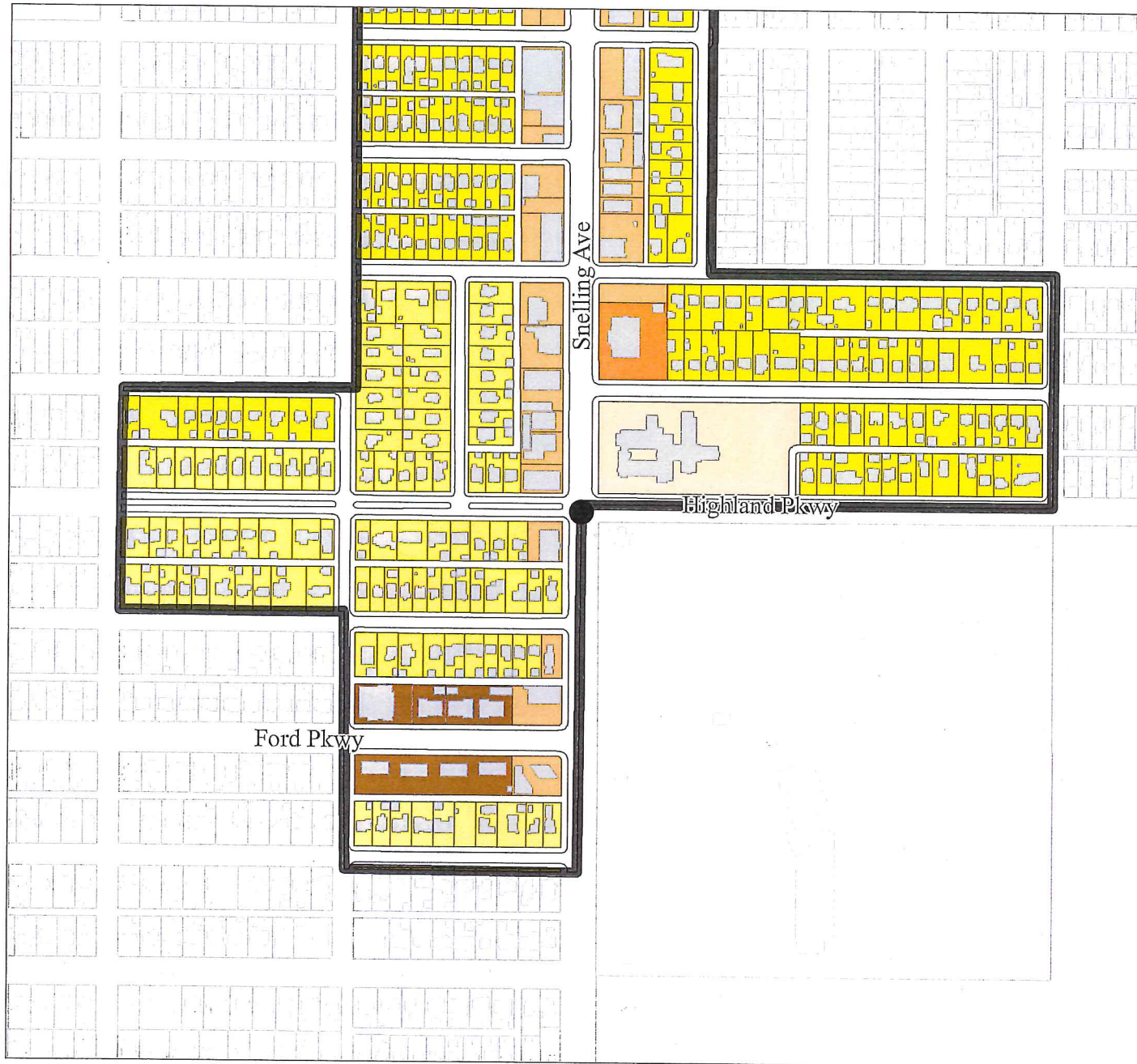
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Changes Made at Neighborhood/Comprehensive Planning Committee



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Original recommendation was for T2. The Committee recommends changing this to T3.



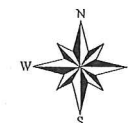
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The original recommendation left this parcel split zoned R4/B2. The committee recommends rezoning the whole parcel to R4.



Changes Made at Neighborhood/Comprehensive Planning Committee



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● BRT Station

Committee Changes

The original recommendation was to rezone these parcels to T3. The committee changed the recommendation to T2 for these parcels.





CITY OF SAINT PAUL
Christopher B. Coleman, Mayor

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March 29, 2017

To: Planning Commission

From: Neighborhood Planning Committee

Re: Snelling Avenue South 40-Acre Zoning Study

BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY

In July 2015, the Saint Paul Planning Commission initiated the South Snelling Zoning Study in recognition of the vision of a mixed use corridor on Snelling Avenue outlined in the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan and neighborhood plans covering the study area. The initializing resolution also noted the imminent start of A Line Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service on Snelling. The zoning study analyzed current land uses and zoning along Snelling Avenue from Interstate 94 to Ford Parkway and within approximately one-quarter mile of intersections with other arterial roads.

The study's primary recommendation is broad adoption of traditional neighborhood zoning designations. Areas proposed for rezoning are primarily currently zoned for multifamily or commercial uses, but also include some parcels fronting on Snelling Avenue that are currently zoned for single family use. The conversion to traditional neighborhood zoning from the current mix of multifamily and commercial designations confers several advantages. Traditional neighborhood districts allow for a range of both commercial and residential uses in a single district, allowing more flexibility in development and encouraging the finer-grained mixing of uses seen in traditional urban form. Traditional neighborhood districts also include design standards which result in more transit- and pedestrian-friendly development. The net impact of the proposed changes on potential density of development is moderate, although traditional neighborhood district dimensional standards do allow for greater density than in the equivalent commercial and residential districts (e.g., T2 versus B2 and RM2). Lastly, while limited up-zoning of some single-family residential parcels near A Line BRT stations was considered—to allow for moderate density development such as duplexes in areas with good access to transit—this strategy is not suggested in these recommendations.

COMMUNITY PROCESS AND CONCERNS

Prior to initiating the formal portion of the Planning Commission review process, staff worked with the three district councils in the study area (Union Park, Macalester Groveland, and Highland) to engage residents, property owners, and other stakeholders through a series of

community meetings regarding the zoning study. The purpose of these meetings was to help stakeholders better understand the purpose of the zoning study, the potential changes to zoning, and how those changes might shape future development in the study area. The meetings also provided a forum in which members of the community could identify areas of concern and provide other feedback on potential zoning changes.

While comments indicated substantial support for the proposed zoning changes, many people voiced concerns about some potential impacts of the changes as redevelopment occurs in the future. Common concerns cited were the potential for increased traffic and congestion (both on Snelling and cross-streets), the potential height of new developments, cumulative impacts of higher density redevelopment, and the impacts to on-street parking. Concerns over on-street parking have been heightened by the construction of new medians on portions of Snelling. As noted, the impact of the zoning changes proposed in this study are moderate in terms of increased potential density. In this context, the most appropriate avenue for addressing the concerns around traffic and building mass/height is through careful review, using established City processes, of development on a project by project basis. Potential impacts on traffic may need to be reassessed if a substantial amount of new development occurs along the corridor that achieves the maximum permitted density in the proposed zoning districts. Because of the flexibility of the proposed traditional neighborhood district zoning, making accurate predictions about the scale and impact on traffic patterns of future development would be based on numerous assumptions. It is staff's opinion that because of the numerous assumptions that would need to be made about future development, attempting to accurately predict these potential impacts is unfeasible, and it was therefore not done as a part of this study. Additionally, as new development occurs, impacts on traffic and parking may be mitigated by the trend towards more multi-modal transportation. If this continues, more trips may be taken using alternative forms of transportation rather than vehicles. Along the Snelling Avenue corridor in particular, there is a trend towards increased transit ridership.

The potential impact of the additional height of buildings is addressed by provisions in the proposed traditional neighborhood zoning districts, and is comparable to the maximum heights permitted under the existing zoning districts that are being recommended for rezoning. The aforementioned provisions that address maximum heights in the proposed zoning districts will be addressed in further detail in the general zoning analysis.

APPLICABLE PLANS

The Future Land Use Map of the 2010 Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan identifies Snelling Avenue within the study area as a Mixed Use Corridor. Randolph and Grand Avenues, and Selby Avenue west of Snelling, also have this designation within the study area. St. Clair Avenue is identified as a Residential Corridor (with the exception of the first block east of Snelling, which is designated as part of the Mixed Use Corridor). The remainder of the study area is identified as an Established Neighborhood. Mixed Use Corridors are identified in the Comprehensive Plan along major thoroughfares that are (or could be in the future) served by public transit. They generally accommodate a mix of residential, commercial, institutional, and smaller-scale industrial uses, along with open space, with residential development at densities of 30-150 units/acre. Residential Corridors pass through Established Neighborhoods and accommodate primarily residential uses, at densities of 4-30 units/acre. Established Neighborhoods accommodate a range of housing types at lower densities, primarily single-family homes and duplexes.

The applicable neighborhood plans are the Union Park Community Plan (2016), the Macalester-Groveland Community Plan (2016) and the Highland Park Neighborhood Plan Summary (2007). Key strategies and policies related to this zoning study are excerpted here:

Union Park Community Plan:

- LU3.2 Explore opportunities to increase density levels and promote new development along key corridors that support transit-oriented development, including along Snelling Avenue and Marshall Avenue between Snelling and Hamline Avenues, and on mixed-use transit routes, while maintaining the historic human scale of the neighborhood.
- H1.1 Support multi-unit mixed-use development in mixed use corridors that can accommodate higher density levels, while minimizing impacts on adjacent lower density areas, and discourage multi-unit housing and retail uses that are incompatible with single-family residential areas.

Macalester-Groveland Community Plan:

- H1.1 Maintain and or establish zoning that encourages compact development along mixed-use corridors that incorporates a mix of uses (commercial, residential, office, intergenerational housing etc.).
- H1.3 Maintain and or establish zoning that preserves lower-density single family houses and duplexes outside of mixed-use corridors.
- LU1.5 explore creating and/or implementing design standards that promote pedestrian-friendly streetscapes—especially along mixed-use corridors.
- H2.5 Support multi-unit mixed-use development in the following corridors: Snelling Avenue, Grand Avenue, St. Clair Avenue, and Randolph Avenue.
- LU1.2 Maintain and/or establish zoning that encourages higher-density (taller) development at the intersection of mixed-use corridors and lower-density (shorter) development at mid-block of mixed-use corridors.

Highland Park Neighborhood Plan Summary:

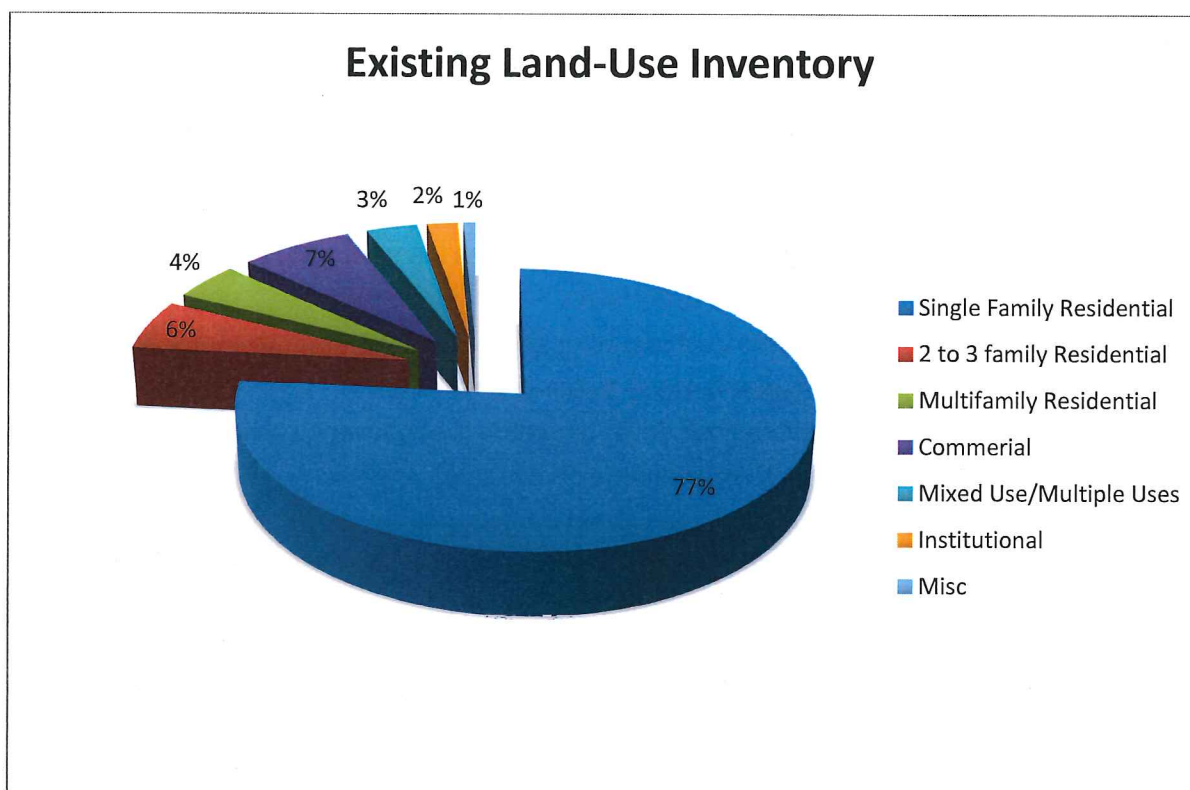
- Snelling-Randolph Commercial Area
 - 8) Consider rezoning portions of the Snelling-Randolph commercial area to TN-2 to support mixed-use development and to provide design standards that limit the visual impacts of parking and maintain attractive building facades.
- Housing
 - 9) Utilize zoning mechanisms, such as TN zoning that allow for residential uses in the commercial areas, while limiting the expansion of commercial uses into residential neighborhoods.

EXISTING LAND-USE AND ZONING

The current zoning in the study area generally reflects the existing underlying land uses, both along Snelling and the major cross-streets and in the adjacent established neighborhoods. Overall, 61% of parcels are currently zoned single family residential, 13% for duplexes, 16% multifamily, and 10% commercial.

EXISTING LAND-USE INVENTORY

Single Family Residential	1294 parcels
2 to 3 family Residential	99 parcels
Multifamily Residential	74 parcels
Commercial	123 parcels
Mixed Use/Multiple Uses	56 parcels
Institutional	34 parcels
Misc	13 parcels



The majority of the study area is in single family residential use. The predominance of single family residential development in the established neighborhood is most pronounced in the southern portion of the study area where the land-use pattern is more homogenous. There are also a number of single family residential uses fronting arterial streets. Many in this latter group are zoned RM2 multifamily. While this zoning district permits higher density residential uses, the parcels are too small for redevelopment for multifamily uses without assembly of multiple parcels or variance, due to the 9000 square foot minimum lot size requirement in RT2 and higher residential districts.

Further north in the study area the existing land-use is more diverse in areas defined by the comprehensive plan as being within an established neighborhood. In Union Park in particular, the land use in these areas consists of a mix of single family and two family residential uses, along with scattered multifamily, and the zoning is primarily RT1 two-family. Most of the parcels meet the minimum lot size of 6000 square feet required for a duplex.

Existing mixed-use and commercial buildings in the study area, and the vast majority of multifamily buildings, are sited on parcels with Snelling Avenue frontage or that front other arterial and collector streets near their intersection with Snelling. The exception is a few clusters of multi-family structures in the portion of the study area north of Summit Avenue. Existing multifamily and commercial development is low to medium density, consisting primarily of one to three story structures. Where commercial buildings exceed one story, they are generally older structures with housing in the upper stories. For the most part, these structures/uses are well below maximum densities allowed under current zoning. The average floor area ratio currently achieved on the parcels that are being considered for rezoning is 0.63; maximum allowed floor area ratio (FAR) under B2 is 2.0, and 1.75 under RM2. However, certain provisions in the current zoning districts, notably minimum lot size requirements, may be impeding potential growth along the corridors in the study area. Under the proposed T2 and T3 zoning along the corridor, it would be theoretically possible to achieve a floor area ratio of 3.0 for new development, provided every new structure in the T2 district was built with structured parking.

GENERAL ZONING ANALYSIS

The recommended zoning changes are primarily on parcels that are zoned for commercial or multifamily residential uses. A small number of parcels that are currently zoned for single family residential uses are also being recommended for rezoning. These are primarily parcels oriented to Snelling on blocks between St. Clair and Randolph, but also include a parcel on the south side of St. Clair just west of Snelling (currently used for parking for the adjacent commercial uses), a parcel on Brimhall just south of St. Clair (currently used for parking for the adjacent multifamily residential), and a parcel owned by Macalester College on Macalester Street to the north of Grand Avenue (currently occupied by a multifamily residential building). Out of the total of 1693 parcels in the study area, 334 parcels adjacent or in close proximity to Snelling are being recommended for rezoning. Of those, just 51 parcels are currently zoned for single-family use. These are the general changes in zoning districts being proposed:

- Parcels zoned B3, general business district, would be rezoned to T2 or T3 traditional neighborhood.
- Parcels zoned RM2, multi-family residential, would be rezoned to T2 traditional neighborhood.
- Parcels zoned B2 community business district would be rezoned to T2 traditional neighborhood.
- Parcels zoned R4 single family residential would be rezoned to T1 traditional neighborhood.

Traditional neighborhood zoning districts are intended to foster the growth and development of mixed use, transit-oriented development. In contrast to the higher-density residential and commercial zoning districts currently used along the corridor, which largely segregate commercial and residential uses into different districts, they allow a range of both commercial and residential uses in in the same district. Allowing this wider range of uses on the corridor will result in a future land use pattern that is more organic and market driven, and will allow commercial and residential development in areas that could only be one or the other under the

current zoning. The vast majority of the uses that are currently permitted in B2 and B3 commercial districts as well as the R4 and RM2 residential districts are also permitted in the traditional neighborhood districts, with the exception of some auto uses permitted in the B3 community business district. The proposed zoning change will prohibit new auto uses from being established on the corridor and the existing automotive uses would become legally nonconforming. Unlike the majority other nonconforming uses, however, there is a specific provision in the zoning code that would allow automotive uses that will become legally nonconforming as a result of the zoning changes to expand without Planning Commission approval, as if they were permitted uses in the district.

The traditional neighborhood districts also differ from other zoning districts in that they include extensive design standards, and have provisions that push building mass towards the street. The traditional neighborhood district design standards regulate building features such as finish materials, window openings, the placement of doors, and the placement of parking. In reviewing new development in traditional neighborhood districts, there is a strong emphasis on ensuring that the design of new development helps contribute to a pedestrian friendly streetscape and corridor. Provisions in these zoning districts also take into account how new development interacts with lower density residential zoning districts, by having a maximum height of 25 ft. at property lines which abut these districts. Structures can exceed this height limit if stepped back from the property lines a distance equal to the additional height, or if they obtain a conditional use permit from the Planning Commission.

Due to the traditional neighborhood design standards, a significant portion of existing commercial structures will become nonconforming in terms of their design, orientation on lot, and placement of parking if the proposed zoning changes are adopted. Conversely, a significant portion of the existing multi-family residential structures would become conforming in regards to the lot coverage of their building foot print. The nonconforming status of the commercial structures will not prohibit the reuse of buildings for conforming uses; nonconforming buildings may be expanded or altered, and lot improvements may be made, so long as they do not increase the nonconformity. Most of the existing multi-family structures would conform to the traditional neighborhood design standards, and could possibly expand under the new traditional neighborhood zoning designation. Expansion of these existing multifamily structures is unlikely, however, because of the additional parking that would need to be added on or near the site and structural issues that would possibly arise from vertical expansions. The zoning change would make it possible for future multiple family structures near these existing multiple family uses to assume a built form which is more consistent with the existing context of multifamily development along the corridor than would be allowed under current multifamily zoning district standards.

Existing land use and zoning and recommended zoning changes are discussed below. The discussion is organized around roughly ½ mile segments of Snelling Avenue, each centered on a station for the A Line BRT.

SNELLING AND DAYTON STATION AREA (See Maps 1-3)

The Dayton Avenue bus rapid transit (BRT) station area is located in the most northerly portion of the study area. The station area has the most diverse mix of any in the study area in terms of both land uses and zoning districts, including industrial, commercial, and residential land uses and zoning districts. The Soo Line Rail Spur, just north of the Dayton Avenue Station, is a significant physical barrier and acts as a dividing line between general land use areas in the

comprehensive plan. The comprehensive plan identifies the area north of the Soo Line rail spur as industrial, while the area south of the rail spur is identified as being within a mixed use corridor along Snelling Avenue and along Selby Avenue east of Snelling, as being within a residential corridor along Marshall Avenue, and as being within an established neighborhood in areas outside of these corridors.

The existing land-use and zoning generally follow the land-use designations outlined in the comprehensive plan south of the Soo Line rail spur. The area north of the spur is identified in the comprehensive plan as being industrial, and there is a significant amount of industrial zoning and land use in the area, particularly adjacent to the rail spur. However, there is also commercial development and zoning along Snelling Avenue, and residential zoning and land uses in the area as well. There are three parcels that are zoned I1, light industrial, which are all owned by Cooperative Plating. The company owns another parcel at 271 Snelling Avenue, zoned B3 general business, which houses the company's offices. Staff is recommending rezoning this parcel on Snelling to IT transitional industrial. The IT transitional industrial district is intended to provide sites for commercial, office, and light industrial uses that are compatible with nearby residential and traditional neighborhood districts. This rezoning would be consistent with the existing land-use pattern and would allow the business to potentially shift a limited scope of activities to this parcel. The IT district has many of the same design standards as the traditional neighborhood districts, such as requiring buildings to anchor the corner, requiring front façade articulation, window and door opening requirements, and requiring parking to be to the rear or side of the principal structure when possible. These design standards would help ensure that any interim development of this parcel is compatible with future development in the surrounding area.

This study is recommending that the B3 (general business) parcels north of the rail spur, all fronting Snelling Avenue, be rezoned to T3 traditional neighborhood, with the exception of the Merriam Park Substation at 1560 Igelhart Avenue. The change from B3 general business to T3 traditional neighborhood is intended to promote higher density pedestrian- and transit-oriented development. The use of T3 zoning at this location is appropriate because of the close proximity to light rail, the interstate, and the Snelling Midway site. The T3 district permits a maximum floor area ratio of 3.0 and a maximum building height of 55 feet, with heights up to 90 feet with a conditional use permit, with additional setbacks required above 75 feet. The area north of the rails spur would act as a transition zone from the more intensive development envisioned at the Snelling Midway site north of Interstate 94 to the proposed T2 zoning districts further south on Snelling Avenue.

South of the rail spur, the study is proposing rezoning parcels zoned RM2 multifamily residential and B2 community business to T2 traditional neighborhood. T2 allows a similar range of uses to the RM2 and B2 districts, and the overall density of development permitted in the three districts is also comparable. In the T2 district, the maximum permitted FAR of new structures is 2.0, but can be increased to 3.0 if buildings are constructed with structured parking. In the B2 district the maximum FAR is 2.0, and in an RM2 district the dimensional standards can be converted to a maximum FAR of 1.75.

The change to T2 would have other implications for the redevelopment potential of some properties. There are provisions of the RM2 district that have possibly impeded development of new multifamily buildings on parcels with this zoning designation. In the district, any structure with three or more units requires a minimum lot area of 9000 square feet, the maximum building foot print is limited to 35% percent of the lot area, and 25' front and rear setbacks and

9' side yard setbacks are required. None of the existing multi-family structures in this station area could be built today under these standards without multiple variances. By contrast, all of the existing multifamily buildings in the station area appear to conform to T2 dimensional standards. If the recommended zoning changes are adopted, infill development on properties in the area currently zoned RM2 could more closely match existing multifamily development in terms of form and mass. The changes would also provide flexibility in terms of allowed uses for all properties proposed for rezoning.

SNELLING AND GRAND STATION AREA (See Maps 4-6)

The Snelling and Grand station is at the north end of the Macalester College campus, and the existing land-use and pattern of development are heavily influenced by the proximity to this institution. There are a number of large institutional buildings on the main campus and along Summit Avenue. The institutional parcels along Summit Avenue are currently zoned RT1, RT2, and R3. This study is proposing to rezone the Macalester-owned parcels on Summit Avenue to RM1, which is consistent with the existing structures and uses. Rezoning these parcels to RM1 will eliminate the 25' maximum height at the rear property line that would apply on abutting parcels on Grand Avenue proposed for rezoning to T2 and T3. The Summit Avenue parcels for rezoning are, for the most part, within a historic overlay district and any exterior changes proposed to structures or new construction on these parcels would require review by the Heritage Preservation Commission and would need to be consistent with the historic district guidelines.

North of Summit Avenue, there are four parcels zoned for commercial use, with three different zoning classifications. Two of the commercial structures in this area are multi-tenant buildings with large front setbacks and parking in the front of the building. This study is recommending that these parcels be rezoned to T2, which would make these buildings nonconforming regarding both their location on the lot and the location of parking, with implications as previously discussed in this memo. The T2 district also allows less signage than the B2 district for a given lot, meaning a variance for signage might be required to reoccupy a commercial space vacant for a year or more. In B2 and B3 zoning districts the maximum square footage of signage allotted to businesses is 2 times the lineal feet of lot frontage. In the traditional neighborhood districts the maximum signage allotted is reduced to 1.5 times the lineal feet of lot frontage. The multi-tenant building at 80 Snelling, for example, currently has 560 square feet of signage at the site. Under the proposed T2 zoning their maximum permitted signage would be reduced to 489 square feet.

Parcels adjacent to the station are currently zoned a mix of B2, RM2 and OS (only one parcel). This study is recommending rezoning the parcels nearest the intersection (the old Stoltz Cleaners site, the mixed use and retail buildings at the NE corner, and the shared surface parking along Grand Avenue) to T3, and those further from the corner of Snelling and Grand to T2. The existing mixed-used building at 32 Snelling Avenue has a floor area ratio of 3.6, which staff is proposing to rezone to T3. Under T3, the building would still exceed the maximum allowed FAR, but it would be closer to conforming. The T3 zoning would allow future redevelopment at up to a 3.0 FAR, matching the scale of the existing mixed use development and nearby institutional structures. New structures would possibly need to be taller to accommodate required parking.

Farther east on Grand Avenue, this study is recommending that parcels zoned RM2 and OS be rezoned to T2. The study also recommends rezoning the church and associated surface parking on the east side of Snelling between Lincoln and Goodrich to T2.

SNELLING AND SAINT CLAIR (See Maps 7-9)

The Saint Clair station is at the southern end of the Macalester Campus. The area is currently characterized by a mix of one-, two-, and three-story commercial and mixed use buildings. South of Saint Clair, this pattern continues on the east side of Snelling to Stanford, where a new one-story commercial building was recently constructed. On the west side, single-family homes fronting intersecting residential streets line Snelling south of the alley between Saint Clair and Berkeley. North of Saint Clair, the Macalester campus is on the west side and single family homes front Snelling beyond the first half-block. At the southwest corner of Snelling and Saint Clair there is a surface parking lot owned by Sweeney Cleaners, but which is also used by other businesses in the area. Cinema Ballroom, just to the east on Saint Clair, uses this lot to meet the off-street parking required by zoning and a condition of their license. If any future redevelopment of the parcel cannot or does not accommodate this parking, Cinema Ballroom would be required to acquire parking at another location or obtain a variance and license modification.

The current zoning of the parcels that are being considered for rezoning in this area are B2, R4, and RM2. This study is recommending that these parcels be rezoned to T3, T2, and T1. Similar to the strategy used at other station areas, the recommendation is that some of the parcels closest to the BRT station be rezoned to T3. The parcels being recommended for T3 zoning are currently being marketed by a broker and will likely be sold as a package for a single development. This study is recommending that the existing two and three story mixed use buildings (at the NE and SW corners of the intersection) and their adjacent parking lots be rezoned to T2. Two of the parking lots serving these businesses are on separate lots and currently zoned R4 single family, making them (legally) nonconforming as to use. Off street parking facilities are permitted on other lots provided the off street parking facility is in the same or less restrictive zoning district than the principle use the parking lot is intended to serve. Rezoning these lots to T2 along with the principle uses they serve would make them conforming.

Most of the block face south of Stanford on the east side of Snelling is single-family homes fronting Snelling Avenue. The parcels are currently zoned R4, the study is recommending rezoning to T1. The T1 zoning district permits a limited range of non-intrusive commercial uses as well as multifamily uses. Commercial and mixed-use buildings have a maximum floor area ratio of 1.0, which would allow for future commercial or mixed use development that is generally compatible in scale with the existing single residential structures. It would also allow for commercial reuse of existing structures, similar to what is seen on Grand Avenue.

Multifamily structures in the T1 district are regulated based on lot area per unit, similar to multifamily districts. The T1 district minimum lot area per unit is 1700 square feet, with a density bonus available for providing structured parking. But unlike multifamily districts, there is no maximum building footprint (usually expressed as a percentage of lot area) and there is no minimum lot size requirement beyond the per-unit requirement. As a result, under T1 zoning new smaller-scale multifamily developments (a type of housing which was common in the past but often not seen in current developments) could be built on the existing single family parcels, and with more flexibility in regards to the built form of the structures.

SNELLING AND RANDOLPH (See Maps 10-12)

In the Snelling and Randolph station area there is currently a range of zoning districts that generally correspond to the underlying land use. At this station area this study is proposing to rezone parcels that front both Snelling and Randolph to T1, T2, or T3. Similar to the approach

taken at other station areas, staff is proposing to rezone the parcels that are in closest proximity to the intersection of the two mixed use corridors to T3. T3 zoning at this intersection will allow future development to be at greater heights, and possibly higher density. New development with more height would be particularly appropriate at the southwest corner considering the context provided by existing development, notably the 5-story multifamily building at 499 Snelling. On the northwest corner of the intersection this study is proposing to rezone the Walgreens parcel to T3, while down-zoning the existing single family housing that abuts the Walgreen's parcel to the west and north from RM2 to RT2. If these parcels were to retain RM2 zoning, then the provision that limits height to 25' at the property line abutting the single family residential uses would not apply, and it would be possible to construct a new building with a 45' – 55' wall at the rear and side setback lines as-of-right. Down-zoning the single family residential parcels to RT2 will push the building mass of future development on the Walgreens parcel toward the street, but still allow moderate intensification of residential density on the parcels currently zoned RM2.

To the south along Snelling, this study is recommending that the mix of B3, B2, OS, and RM2 be rezoned to T2. The current mix of zoning is fairly parcel-specific based on the underlying land uses. The notable exception is two legally nonconforming multifamily residential buildings in the B3 zoning district at 535 Snelling and 601 Snelling. These were constructed between 2003 and 2004, under a provision in the code that allowed multifamily residential uses in the B3 district. The provision has since been removed from the code, making the buildings legally nonconforming. Due to the similarity of height and density allowances in the B3 and T2 districts, the buildings are characteristic of the scale of future multifamily residential development that could be built under the proposed T2 zoning.

SNELLING AND HIGHLAND (See Maps 13-15)

At the Highland Parkway station area this study is proposing rezoning a mix of RM2, OS, B3, B2, and R4 (one parcel) districts to T2 and T1. The parcel where Gloria Dei church is located (NE corner of Highland Parkway and Snelling, currently zoned R4) is recommended for rezoning to T1. This zoning designation would give the church the flexibility to accommodate accessory office or similar less intense uses that are permitted in the T1 zoning district. The remainder of the parcels fronting Snelling in the area—currently zoned RM2, OS, B2 and B3—are recommended for rezoning to T2. This change would generally be consistent with the underlying land uses, with the exception of the auto repair business, Parkway Auto Care, at 1581 Ford Parkway. Although this use would become legally nonconforming it would be allowed to expand as though it were a conforming use under the provisions of Sec. 62.106 (o). The property-owner initiated rezoning to T3 at 658 Snelling for the construction of The Waters senior housing development could be an indication that rezoning may spur investment in the area.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY

Over the course of the study, a number of zoning strategies that are not included in the recommendations of the study were evaluated. These included an examination of the feasibility of moderately up-zoning some parcels that are currently zoned R3 and R4, single family residential, to RT1 two-family residential. In some areas, these lots have sufficient area and width to allow conversion of single family homes to duplexes without variances if RT1 zoning were in place. This would provide an opportunity to allow for moderate housing production in areas well-served by transit but not immediately on Snelling or a major cross street. It could also act as a transitional zoning district between the more intensive traditional neighborhood

zoning districts in the corridors and the single family residential zoning districts in the adjacent neighborhoods. Other potential strategies that were identified during the study but are not recommended at this time include the use of accessory units and reduction in minimum parking requirements along high capacity (LRT and BRT) transit lines. These and other strategies could help to promote more efficient development and accommodate more residential development complimentary to the existing character of established neighborhoods as an alternative to higher-density projects along Snelling and other corridors.

REQUESTED ACTION

Release Snelling Avenue South 40-Acre Zoning Study for public review and set public hearing for May 19, 2017.

city of saint paul
planning commission resolution
file number
date

RECOMMENDATIONS ON SNELLING AVENUE SOUTH ZONING STUDY

WHEREAS, pursuant to Sec. 61.801(b) of the Saint Paul Zoning Code, the Saint Paul Planning Commission, with Resolution 15-44 on July 10, 2015, initiated the Snelling Avenue South Zoning Study; and

WHEREAS, the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan identifies Snelling Avenue as part of a 'Mixed Use Corridor', described by the Comprehensive Plan as an area along a primary thoroughfare that is well-served by transit and intended to accommodate the highest-density development outside of Downtown; and

WHEREAS, the Metro Transit A-Line Arterial Bus Rapid Transit began service along Snelling Avenue in July of 2016, bringing a higher level of transit service to the corridor; and

WHEREAS, the Union Park Community Plan includes policies that support opportunities to increase density levels and promote new development along Snelling Avenue and to support mixed use development in mixed use corridors while minimizing impacts to adjacent lower density areas; and

WHEREAS, the Macalester-Groveland Community Plan supports compact, pedestrian-friendly development and streetscapes along mixed use corridors including Snelling, Grand, St. Clair, and Randolph Avenues, while maintaining zoning that preserves lower-density residential areas outside of those corridors; and

WHEREAS, the Highland Pak Neighborhood Plan Summary calls for considering rezoning portions of the 'Snelling-Randolph commercial area' to T2 traditional neighborhood and using traditional neighborhood zoning more generally to allow for residential uses in commercial areas while limiting commercial expansion into residential neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, the Snelling Avenue South Zoning Study found that traditional neighborhood zoning allows for appropriate density of development in the Snelling Avenue corridor, provides for pedestrian- and transit-friendly design in new development, and allows for flexibility in use of property; and

WHEREAS, the Saint Paul Planning Commission finds that the goals of the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan and applicable neighborhood plans are advanced by the zoning recommendations contained in the study; and

moved by _____
seconded by _____
in favor _____
against _____

WHEREAS, on May 19, 2017, the Saint Paul Planning Commission held a public hearing on the Snelling Avenue South Zoning Study, and held the public record open for written comments until May 26, 2017; and

WHEREAS, the Saint Paul Planning Commission referred the Zoning Study and public testimony back to a joint meeting of the Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning Committees for review and consideration; and

WHEREAS, the Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning Committees forwarded its recommendations and rationale for amendments to the Saint Paul Zoning Code based on the Zoning Study in a June 13, 2017, memorandum to the Saint Paul Planning Commission;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, under the provisions of Minnesota Statutes § 462.357 and § 61.801 of the Legislative Code, that the Planning Commission hereby recommends to the Mayor and City Council the rezoning of certain properties as shown on the maps incorporated into the Snelling Avenue South Zoning Study, and the formal acknowledgement of recommendations for future study as described in the Snelling Avenue South Zoning Study.