

Public Comments received by Ward 4 for Ord 21-8:

Dear St Paul City Council members:

We write to the council today in strong opposition to zoning change request for 2069 Marshall Ave. We live 5 houses down from the proposed site at 2093 Marshall Ave and have lived here for a decade. We hope to continue making this neighborhood our home.

The West Marshall Zoning study which concluded just 2 years ago, with significant input and feedback from the community rightly changed the zoning along the Marshall Avenue corridor. In our block between Finn and Cleveland Ave, houses were all upzoned from R3 to RM1, T2 or T3. Conversion of corner property at Cleveland and Marshall was done to T3 rightly as a neighborhood node using a clearly defined process at that time. This particular location in 2069 Marshall was upzoned from R3 to a T2 after careful, process followed by THIS city and its staff. Being next to a T3 neighbor does not warrant a zoning change.

NOTHING HAS CHANGED since that study. Our street, Marshall Avenue, continues to be the exact same transit corridor that it was then at the time of the study. Everyone knew that the B-Line was slated to come through Marshall at that time and we know that now. That 2018 study was done and aimed at improving affordable housing and density along the corridor. A T2 for this site allows for significant increase in the number of units available for rent compared to the duplex that currently sits on the plot. A T2 zoning adequately meets the need for density improvement.

We want our neighborhood to be a vibrant place for families like mine. We are not opposed to development - we fully embrace the notion that single family home owners like us can happily co-exist and share Marshall Ave with renters who will occupy numerous units being built just on our block. But we should really reexamine what this has meant -- in our one block of Marshall between Finn and Cleveland -- only FOUR out of ELEVEN homes will remain -- all others are slated for demolition into large multi-family apartment units -- all in the span of one summer.

We ask that while you think about density - you also think about the rest of the neighborhood. Is complete change of a neighborhood's character within a span of a year what the city of St Paul wants? Is this what the 2040 Comprehensive Plan wants to do? Demolish every single family home to make way for larger and larger complexes with constant allowance of variances? Why does the zoning process exist if builders simply have to ask for a variance and the BZA willingly grants one?

We ask you to vote to deny the change request submitted to you today.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely

Lillian Hang and Kundan Nepal

Members of the St. City Council:

My name is Michael Lambert and I have lived at 2168 Carroll Avenue for 10 years with my partner C. Scott Cooper. We chose Merriam Park West as it is the perfect blend of historic traditional neighborhood, accessibility and commercial/retail space.

As a member of the Merriam Park community, I am writing to oppose the proposed rezoning of 2069 Marshall Ave from T2 to T3, allowing for a **5-story** building to be built in this primarily traditional housing neighborhood. The property at **2069 Marshall Ave.** was already rezoned in 2018 (*just a few years ago*) to T2, a conscious and deliberate decision that involved many months of discussions. At that same time, the neighboring property of **2063 Marshall** was rezoned to T3. Those decisions provide for sufficient density consistent with the Comprehensive 2040 Plan. We do not feel the proximity of 2069 Marshall to 2063 is sufficient reason to warrant another rezoning, it just does not make sense to change the building height in this primarily single-family traditional home neighborhood. Please stick with what was already carefully decided in 2018.

The neighborhood has been very vocal already about this issue. When the rezoning of 2069 Marshall came before the St. Paul Zoning Committee on January 15, 28 residents of Merriam Park sent e-mails opposing the project. When it came to oral testimony, there were eight speakers opposed. Clearly the neighbors have thoughts, and have made them heard. **Please consider the neighborhood's concerns when making your decision.**

Here are some of our concerns as to how this rezoning would have a negative impact on the neighborhood:

- Allowing for extra height at 2069 Marshall will adversely affect the neighborhood. A shadow study presented by the developer Robert Page revealed that the three homes directly north of the development would be negatively impacted by the shadow of the building and **would be completely in shadows during the entire winter season and would be partially shaded in the spring, summer and fall** (negatively impacting several established gardens). These long time homeowners (and taxpayers) did not invest in this wonderful neighborhood 20-some years ago thinking an oversized apartment would be built behind them, leaving them literally in the dark.
- After discussing the topic at three consecutive meetings, the Union Park District Council's Committee on Land Use and Economic Development (CLUED) **voted down** a proposal to support the rezoning of 2069 Marshall to T3. Several committee members said they wanted to hear more information. They asked for proposals for a 3-story or 4-story apartment building and how such a project would impact the shadows and other issues in the neighborhood. **The developers have yet to create and present these options!** The community weighed in and lots of comments were given in opposition of this rezoning, none were in favor.
- All of the benefits that have been presented about this development (density, affordable housing, commercial space, alignment with the City's 2040 plan, etc.) do not require a zoning change. This rezoning request is purely selfish on the part of the developer to maximize profits and receive spot-zoning from the City with no regard to the surrounding neighbors.

The rezoning of 2069 Marshall Avenue will negatively impact our neighborhood for many decades to come. While the neighborhood acknowledges and supports the development of the neighborhood node at 2063 Marshall, we cannot support the zoning change to 2069 Marshall. **We ask you to deny the application of 2069 Marshall Ave LLC**

to rezone the property at 2069 Marshall Ave and leave the zoning as T2 Traditional Neighborhood.

Sincerely,
Michael Lambert and C. Scott Cooper

To members of the St. City Council,

My name is Jonathan Bream; I've been the homeowner directly behind 2069 Marshall Ave. since September 1991. I strongly oppose the proposed rezoning of that property from T2 to T3, allowing for a 5-story building. I ask the City Council to reject the rezoning for the following reasons.

1. What the impact is.

Allowing for a 5-story apartment building at 2063-2069 Marshall will have a dramatic effect on the integrity and character of the neighborhood and an **irreversibly destructive effect on the quality of life for my family and our immediate neighbors**. According to a shadow study presented by co-developer Robert Page, the three properties on Iglehart Avenue immediately behind his 5-story complex will be in shadows for the entire winter and part of our backyards, including some of our gardens, will be in shadows in spring, summer and fall.

In a word, that's depressing. No sunlight in the winter? And limited sunlight the rest of the year? My wife is a master gardener affiliated with the University of Minnesota Extension Service who does experiments in our backyard gardens testing seeds, plants and plant treatments in order to help educate the community about gardening. She helps provide a valuable service to the vast gardening community in Minnesota. A 5-story complex will block sun from some of her gardens as well as some long-term gardens of our immediate neighbors.

We have lived here for 30 years; neighbors on either side of us have lived here for 25 and 23 years, respectively. When we purchased these homes in this wonderful neighborhood, we had no idea that we might someday be obliterated by an outsized 5-story building behind us.

I was born, raised and educated in St. Paul (public schools). I have been a St. Paul homeowner since 1977. My wife and I raised our son in St. Paul. I hope City Hall will be responsive to and respectful of its longtime residents and property owners.

2. What the neighborhood says.

At three consecutive meetings of the Union Park District Council's Committee on Land Use and Economic Development (CLUED), this rezoning proposal for 2069 Marshall was discussed. **CLUED voted**

not to support the rezoning request to T3. Committee members requested more information. They asked for shadow studies for both a 4-story and a 3-story building. The developers did not respond.

When the St. Paul Zoning Committee voted on the rezoning on January 14, Chair Cedrick Baker told the developers, in part: "What we're hearing from residents, they're feeling left out of the conversation. I think the right thing to do is to over-communicate with the intentions. The applicant stated that they went to meetings, but what I heard came more across as a check the box rather than a true opportunity to connect with neighbors and answer questions that gives them greater information and insight and clarity on what to expect moving forward. And potentially influence because you're all one neighborhood."

Since that admonition, the developers presented a brief shadow study at a CLUED meeting and have not otherwise communicated with the neighborhood. When I phoned co-developer David Kvasnik in late December to discuss plans for his project, I asked him 51 questions and he answered only 11 of them; the other answers were either "I don't want to discuss that" or "no comment."

For the record, Merriam Park neighbors sent 28 emails in opposition to the Zoning Committee; one email in support was received from a Frogtown resident. For oral testimony, there were 8 opposed and 1 in favor, a lobbyist from Sustain St. Paul.

3. History of rezoning for 2069 Marshall.

Less than 2-1/2 years ago, in October 2018, 2069 Marshall was rezoned to T2 after months and months of careful deliberation. **T2 provides for the kind of density that the Comprehensive 2040 Plan and our Merriam Park neighborhood seeks.** Just because 2069 Marshall is adjacent to the node property 2063 Marshall, classified T3, is not sufficient reason to up-zone it to T3. Enough is enough.

I'm not opposed to the eventual development of the node at 2063 Marshall. Density matters. Affordability matters. Neighbors matter. Balance the interests of what's there and what could be there. Compromise matters.

Please vote no to the rezoning of 2069 Marshall.

Thank you for listening.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Bream

Members of the St. Paul City Council:

My name is Harry Balley, and I have lived at 2062 Iglehart Avenue for 25 years with my wife and daughters. We have called this home as a residence and community.

As a member of Merriam Park and as a neighbor directly north of the proposed project, I am writing to oppose the proposed rezoning of 2069 Marshall Ave from T2 to T3, allowing for a 5-story, 55 foot hulking building. Although we welcome progress and infusion of new neighbors, there is an incredible lack of planning and information available as two absent landlords propose "development." I urge you to reject the rezoning application and strike a balance between the City's plan for density and the interests of the current longtime neighborhood residents.

The neighborhood has been very vocal already about this issue. When the rezoning of 2069 Marshall came before the St. Paul Zoning Committee on January 15, 28 residents of Merriam Park sent e-mails opposing the project. Only one e-mail was received in support – from a person living in miles away. When it came to oral testimony, there were eight speakers opposed, only one in favor – a lobbyist from Sustain St. Paul. Twenty eight voices were dismissed. Clearly the neighbors have thoughts, and have made them heard. **Please consider the neighborhood's voice when making your decision.**

Here are some of our concerns as to how this rezoning would have a negative impact on the neighborhood:

- The property at 2069 Marshall Ave. was already rezoned in 2018 to T2, a conscious and deliberate decision that involved many months of discussions. At that same time, the neighboring property of 2063 Marshall was rezoned to T3 because it is part of the neighborhood node. Those decisions provide for sufficient density consistent with the Comprehensive 2040 Plan. We do not feel the proximity of 2069 Marshall to 2063 is sufficient reason to warrant another rezoning. Please stick with what was already carefully decided in 2018.
- Limited information currently available about the 2063-2069 project is not sufficient to support a change from zoning that was approved less than 2.5 years ago. The developers have been slow to give any idea of plans other than one drawing, from one perspective.
- Allowing for extra height, especially as the rendered drawing shows a 55 foot box encompassing the entire properties of 2063 and 2069 Marshall, will adversely affect the neighborhood. We saw the shadow study presented by developer Robert Page that revealed our home would be negatively impacted by the shadow of the building and would be completely in shadows during the winter season and would be partially shaded in the spring, summer and fall (negatively impacting several established gardens of our neighbors). We did not invest in this wonderful neighborhood 20+ years ago thinking an oversized apartment would be built behind us, leaving us in the dark.

- As a believer in innovation, solar panels for our home are in serious consideration. That coupled with an electric vehicle are two things in our near future. Casting a shadow over our garage, backyard and home, during the shortest days of the year, would negatively affect our ability to capture a renewable resource and reduce our carbon footprint. That along with affects of no direct sunlight for hours in a day don't make sense.
- After discussing the topic at three consecutive meetings, the Union Park District Council's Committee on Land Use and Economic Development (CLUED) **voted down** a proposal to support the rezoning of 2069 Marshall to T3. Several committee members said they wanted to hear more information. They asked for proposals for a 3-story or 4-story apartment building and how such a project would impact the shadows and other issues in the neighborhood. The developers have yet to create and present these options. The community weighed in and lots of comments were given in opposition of this rezoning, none were in favor. The community and CLUED have not received enough information to support a zoning change.
- All of the benefits that have been presented about this development (density, affordable housing - which is questionable as the proposition is up to \$900 per micro unit [aka studio], commercial space, alignment with the City's 2040 plan, etc.) do not require a zoning change. This rezoning request is purely for profit on the part of the developers to maximize economics and receive spot-zoning from the City with no regard to the surrounding neighbors.

The rezoning of 2069 Marshall Avenue is a big ask that will impact our neighborhood for many decades to come. While the neighborhood acknowledges and supports the development of the neighborhood node at 2063 Marshall, we cannot support the zoning change to 2069 Marshall. **We ask you to deny the application of 2069 Marshall Ave LLC to rezone the property at 2069 Marshall Ave and leave the zoning as T2 Traditional Neighborhood.**

Sincerely,

Harry Balley

Dear councilwoman Jalil,

Our house at 2083 Carroll Ave. Has been in our family for 46 years. My wife and I have owned and restored it for the last 20 years. I am a proud graduate of St. Paul Central and my son will be graduating from there this year while my daughter is spending her last year at Ramsey and next year will be a Minutemen!

St. Paul is very important to me.

I am writing this letter to strongly oppose the rezoning of the property at 2069 Marshall. I know you have heard all about the shadow studies and the already agreed upon zoning of this and the adjacent property at 2063 Marshall. I also know that affordable housing is a issue you have worked hard on. I do not oppose an apartment building, I oppose the size of it!

We are asking that you put the desires of the neighborhood in front of a developers pocketbook. We are asking that existing homeowners and renters opinions matter more than getting a few more units in the building. I understand the desire to get more people living in these apartment buildings, but please remember those of who already live here, oh, and vote here!!

Regards,

Ross and Patty Robey

Dear Councilmembers,

My name is David Kvasnik and I am one of the developers on this project. I am writing this letter in support of the request to rezone 2069 Marshall from T-2 to T-3. Rob Page and his family own 2069 Marshall which is currently T-2 and rent it out as a duplex to students. My family owns 2063 Marshall which is currently T-3 and we also rent it out to students. Using these two large parcels at a neighborhood node to only house up to 12 people and park 8 cars is not in line with the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. Because of this issue, we have been working for close to 5 months with our architect and multiple other professionals to put together a plan for a mixed use building with a commercial space and 48+ plus units of apartments with a mix of Micro Units and 2 Bedroom units on the corner of Cleveland and Marshall to replace these two student rentals.

We have attended the Committee for Land Use and Economic Development meeting for The Union Park District Council, the Transportation Committee Meeting for the Union Park District Council and the January Board Meeting for the Union Park District Council. Not only am I one of the developers on this project, I also live right here in Union Park at 2012 Selby, work at 2190 Marshall and manage many of the properties that make up the commercial core of Marshall and Cleveland neighborhood node.

The intersection of Marshall and Cleveland is identified in the 2040 Plan as a Neighborhood Node. The 2040 Comprehensive Plan explains that "Neighborhood Nodes are denser concentrations of development relative to the adjacent future land use categories." Policy LU-30 of the 2040 Plan specifically states that we should "Focus growth at neighborhood nodes using the following principals" of "Increasing density toward the center of the node and transition in scale to surrounding land uses". In fact the density allowance according to Figure LU-4 of the 2040 Plan titled "2040 Residential Land Use Density Ranges" shows us that the mixed use density at a neighborhood node should be 50-200 units per acre. This is a large increase over the previous 2030 Plan guidance for this corner which was in effect during the Marshall Avenue Rezoning in 2018 that dictated 4-30 units per acre. The new 2040 Plan which went into effect just this last year calls for a much higher density. Quick math shows that the 2063-2069 parcel is actually directed by the 2040 plan to have up to 84 units of housing on its .42 acres of land.

The fact of the matter is that without T-3 zoning for 2069 Marshall we are unable to increase the density at the center of the node and we will never be able to build a mixed use development on this corner or meet the goals of the 2040 Plan. Trying to build a T-3 apartment building on the single corner lot is impossible for multiple reasons due to width limitations, financial limitations and current parking requirement limitations. In order to achieve the type of corner development that the 2040 Plan demands we need to be able to rezone 2069 Marshall to T-3 in order to combine it with the 2063 T-3 parcel. In doing so we can not only meet the requirements necessary to build the project, we can also achieve more of the policy goals identified in the 2040 Plan.

For instance, Policy LU-31 states that we should "Invest in neighborhood nodes to achieve development that enable people to meet their daily needs within walking distance and improves equitable access to amenities, retail and services". In response to this we plan to offer a commercial space on the corner of

the building and an investment in bike storage for every unit. Additionally, the building has front door immediate access to the 21, 86 and future BRT lines that run right past the property and through this node intersection every day.

Furthermore, Policy LU-33 of the 2040 Plan states that we should “promote amenities that support those who live and work in the neighborhood nodes, including frequent transit service, vibrant business districts” and “a range of housing choices”. Our project includes units that we hope to price in the \$900-\$1000 per month range. We also plan to have some 2 bedroom units that we hope to price near \$1600 per month or roughly \$800 per person. Our goal is that these units are filled with families with children, or young professionals looking for a home office or individuals looking to save money by living with a roommate. Our building is being built with this in mind and we have made that our goal from day one. We are not building a 4 bedroom dorm room or a \$1900 per month 1 bedroom even though that would be the cheapest to build and therefore least risky. Those already exist all over this area. We are building micro units and 2 bedroom units to accommodate the living needs of regular people on regular budgets. None of this is possible without the inclusion of the 2069 parcel.

The 2040 Comprehensive Plan states that the “Plan is the City’s vision or “blueprint” for guiding future development through 2040”. Additionally it specifically states that it should inform zoning decisions and the “Zoning actions must be consistent with the comprehensive plan”. It even goes further on Page 18 to say that the comprehensive plan should “guide private investment” quote “the comprehensive plan also establishes priorities for where the city wants privately funded developments to occur, consistent with public investments in housing, transportation, public utilities and parks” the quote goes further to say, and I quote directly “high density multi-family construction should be concentrated at neighborhood nodes”.

We agree with the 2040 Comprehensive Plan and the City Staff report which recommends approval of our request to rezone 2069 Marshall from T-2 to T-3 in order to meet this vision.

Sincerely,

David Kvasnik

VOTE NO!!!

Dear Council person,

I , and most of the neighborhood, is opposed to the proposed apartment building on Cleveland and Marshall.

It will shade the gardens on Iglehart and eliminate their privacy in their yards and in their homes.

The continued tearing down of over 100 year old homes for more apartments is inappropriate for our sweet 112 plus year old neighborhood.

Our property values are affected in a neighborhood that pays very high taxes.
Yes, we pay very high taxes here.

Many of us in this stable neighborhood invested in our homes and the city in the 60's and 70's when many were fleeing to the burbs.
and this is the thanks we get? More and more apartments?

We are not stupid, the proposed 1 bedroom apartments are for St Thomas Students and the continued encroachment of students into our neighborhood is disruptive to our peaceful lives. (another story)

Please help preserve our beautiful antique neighborhood and vote against the proposed apartment building on cleveland and Marshall.

Thankyou.
Respectfully,
Nancy Hone

Hi This is Jonathan Bream I live at 2068 Iglehart and I'm calling to ask Councilmember Jalali to vote no to the rezoning of 2069 Marshall. I live directly behind that house. I've lived here for 30 years and allowing piece rezoning of a 5 story building dramatically changed the integrity of the neighborhood and irreversibly destroy my quality of life. The shadow study the developers have shown us says my house will be in shadows all winter long. Talk about depressing. And the other three seasons, my yard will be in partially in shadows because of this oversized building. It will affect our long term guards and the experiments that my wife conducts for the U of M Extension Service and her experiments are community service to gardeners around the state. The neighborhood has already spoken out against this proposal, 28-1 in emails sent to the zoning comity, 28 against, 1 in favor and that person lived in Frog Town. The Union Park District Council their development comity voted to not support this rezoning issue even though it was discussed at three meetings. And you know the City Council already rezoned this property less than two and a half years ago. T2 allows for the density the city wants and the neighborhood wants and T2 would keep us neighbors happy. So I'm asking you Councilmember to vote no to the rezoning of 2069 Marshall.

Dear Councilwoman Jalali,

Hello. My name is Laura O'Brien Smith and I live at 2127 Iglehart Avenue. My phone number is 651-647-1025. I have lived in this charming neighborhood for 15 years. I'm reaching out to you today to urge you to vote NO on the rezoning of 2069 Marshall, that's ORD 21-8 on the agenda for the next City Council meeting.

The City can accomplish its goals of density, affordability and access to transit with the current T2 zoning. Developers can create an apartment building to meet those needs under T2 zoning. This is a point so thoughtfully and clearly stated by Councilmember Prince at the March 3 meeting.

There is no compelling reason to permanently up-zone this property. After careful consideration and deliberation, 2069 Marshall was already rezoned from R3 to T2 in 2018. Zoning is not meant to be changed every few years. The T2 zoning is the appropriate scale for development at this property. The developer can work within the zoning laws and make a fair profit. Bigger is not better.

Our neighborhood will be adding many, many new residents from other developments on Marshall between Wilder and Cretin, and there is no need to cram in more than the zoning allows on each parcel. We accept that development will occur (who doesn't want to live here!), but it must be done so with careful consideration, control, and respect for the community.

The neighborhood has spoken overwhelmingly against this rezoning as evidenced by letters and voicemails received by the Zoning Committee last month and the City Council last week.

Please listen to the neighbors and vote NO to the rezoning of 2069 Marshall Ave on Wed.

Thank you.

--Laura