

# Staff Report APC 21-1

Lexington Station  
Apartments

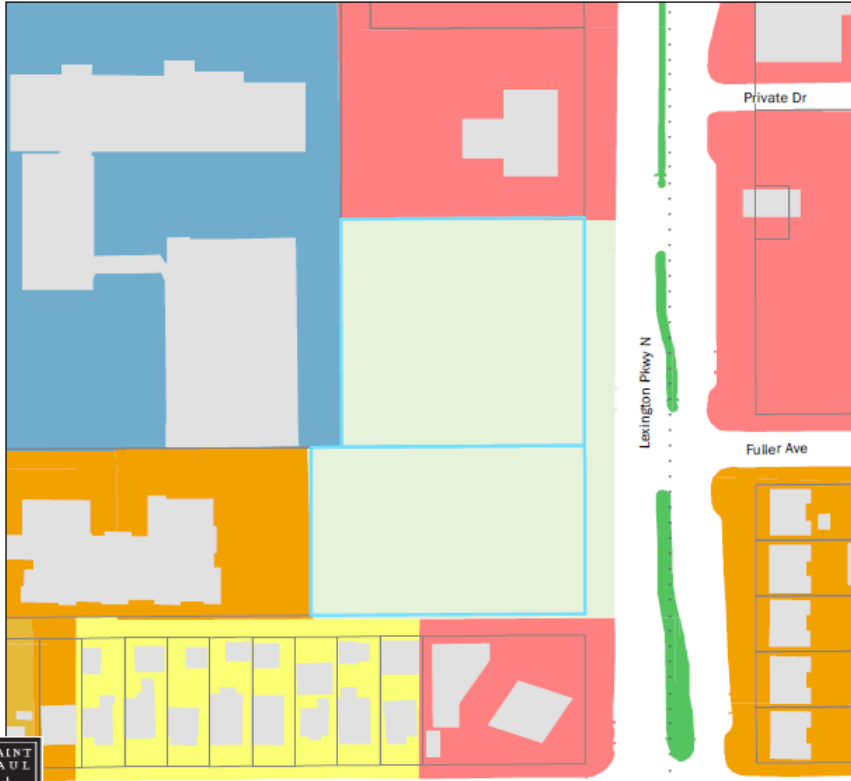
411-417 Lexington Pkwy. N.

# Site Plan Review Process and Timeline

- ▶ Site Plan Review is a delegated function of the Planning Commission, typically decided by staff
- ▶ Reviewers across city departments and jurisdictions including: Zoning, Planning, Sewers, Traffic Engineering, Mapping and Records, Construction, Transportation Planning and Safety, Forestry, Parks, SPRWS, DSI, Ramsey County, Metro Transit, Watershed Districts, etc.
- ▶ Site plans are reviewed for compliance with ordinance and policy

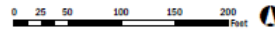
## Lexington Station Apartments

- ▶ Planning Commission voted to review the site plan on December 4, 2020
- ▶ Site Plan Review Committee reviewed the plans, noted required revisions, and recommended approval with conditions on January 8, 2021
- ▶ Zoning Committee Public Hearing and recommended approval with conditions on January 14, 2021
- ▶ Planning Commission vote to approve the site plan failed; voted to lay over the decision on January 22, 2021
- ▶ Planning Commission denied the Site Plan on February 5, 2021
- ▶ Alatus appealed the Planning Commission decision to City Council on February 12, 2021



**FILE #20-102-273 Existing Land Use**  
**Application of Lexington Station**

Application Type: Site Plan Review  
 Application Date: December 29, 2020  
 Planning District: 13



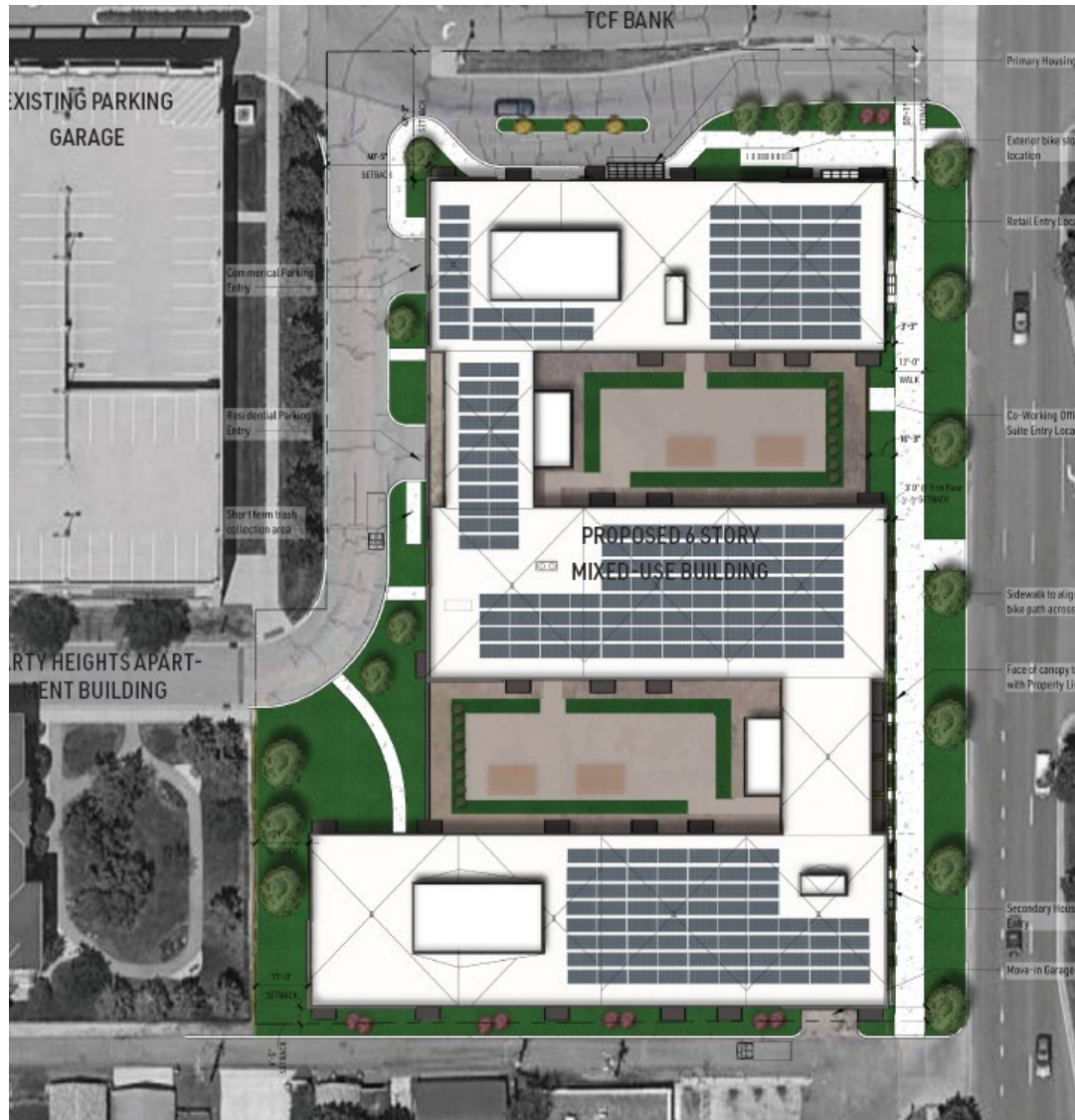
This document was prepared by the Saint Paul Planning and Economic Development Department and is intended to be used for reference and illustrative purposes only. This drawing is not a legally recorded plat, survey, official tax map or engineering schematic, and is not intended to be used as such. Data source: City of Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Metropolitan Council, State of Minnesota.

**Subject Parcel(s) Outlined in Blue**

- |                           |                                |                                |              |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------|
| Parcel/Poly on            | Multifamily                    | Industrial and Utility         | Railway      |
| Farmstead                 | Office                         | Extractive                     | Airport      |
| Seasonal/Vacation         | Retail and Other Commercial    | Institutional                  | Agricultural |
| Single Family Detached    | Mixed Use Residential          | Park, Recreational or Preserve | Undeveloped  |
| Manufactured Housing Park | Mixed Use Industrial           | Golf Course                    | Water        |
| Single Family Attached    | Mixed Use Commercial and Other | Major Highway                  |              |







## Development Overview:

- T4 zoning and design standards
- 228 residential units
- 3,000 SF of ground level commercial space
- 254 structured parking spaces
- Floor area ratio of 2.72
- 15' wide landscaped boulevard  
12' sidewalk along Lexington Pkwy. (Allows for future ped/bike facilities)

## Testimony Received:

Between Planning Commission  
Zoning Committee Public Hearing  
and this Appeal:

- 9 letters and 1 speaker in support
- 21 letters and 10 speakers against

# Site Plan Approval Requires Consistency with 11 Findings (Sec 61.402(c))

1. **The city's adopted comprehensive plan and development or project plans for sub-areas of the city.**
2. **Applicable ordinances of the city.**
3. Preservation of unique geologic, geographic or historically significant characteristics of the city and environmentally sensitive areas.
4. Protection of adjacent and neighboring properties through reasonable provision for such matters as surface water drainage, sound and sight buffers, preservation of views, light and air, and those aspects of design which may have substantial effects on neighboring land uses.
5. The arrangement of buildings, uses and facilities of the proposed development in order to ensure abutting property and/or its occupants will not be unreasonably affected.
6. Creation of energy-conserving design through landscaping and location, orientation and elevation of structures.
7. Safety and convenience of both vehicular and pedestrian traffic both within the site and in relation to access streets, including traffic circulation features, the locations and design of entrances and exits and parking areas within the site.
8. The satisfactory availability and capacity of storm and sanitary sewers, including solutions to any drainage problems in the area of the development.
9. Sufficient landscaping, fences, walls and parking necessary to meet the above objectives.
10. Site accessibility in accordance with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), including parking spaces, passenger loading zones and accessible routes.
11. Provision for erosion and sediment control as specified in the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's "Manual for Protecting Water Quality in Urban Areas."

## Finding 1 - Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan

While the site plan is generally consistent with the applicable policies of the 2040 Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan (2020), the Lexington Station Area Plan (2008), and Union Park Community Plan (2016), on balance the site plan is inconsistent with the 2040 Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan (2020) core values of equity, affordability, and sustainability.

- Planning Commission Resolution 21-5

- ▶ Finding acknowledges that the Site Plan is consistent with all applicable policies and reaches an unsupported conclusion of inconsistency with the City's core values
- ▶ ...affordable housing is a major component of the Site Plan. 288 new residential units will be created in the City. The Appellant is voluntarily applying for the City's 4(d) Affordable Housing Incentive Program
- ▶ The Site Plan supports the City's aspirational values related to sustainability. The Project includes a rooftop solar array. Finding #6 was met - Creation of energy-conserving design through landscaping and location, orientation and elevation of structures
- ▶ The property has been a vacant for more than a decade. This Site Plan increases density on valuable urban land and calls for high-quality urban design that supports pedestrian friendliness and healthy environment, and enhances the public realm
- ▶ The appellant suggests additional conditions be added relating to equity, affordability, and sustainability



## Finding #2 - Compliance with Applicable Ordinances

The Site Plan does not comply with the following Code Section 66.343 - Traditional neighborhood district design standards:

- 66.343(b)(2) - Transitions to lower density neighborhoods. Transitions in density or intensity shall be managed through careful attention to building height, scale, massing and solar exposure.
- 66.343(b)(16) - Interconnected street and alley network. The existing street and alley network shall be preserved and extended as part of any new development. If the street network has been interrupted, it shall be restored whenever possible.

- Planning Commission Resolution 21-5

- ▶ The site is bordered by a gas station, parking garage, four-lane road and a commercial area. “Gradual transition” in building height and mass is unreasonable, and impractical for this site based on surrounding land uses
- ▶ Extension of the street network is impractical. Potential continuation of the street grid beyond the site is not in the developer’s control
- ▶ The Lexington Station Area Plan promotes the inclusion of public art, the creation of active uses on the first floor and the display of large glass frontages, which the development seeks to provide
- ▶ The original Staff Report found that the site plan is in compliance with Traditional Neighborhood Design Standards

# Next Steps

Due date for decision by  
April 17, 2021 under MN  
Statute 15.99

- ▶ Appellant's request is to grant the appeal and adopt the original staff recommendation to Approve with Conditions:
  1. Final Landscape Plan shall be approved by the City Forester
  2. Sewer plans and technical details shall be approved by the Public Works Sewer Division
  3. Traffic Impact Study shall be accepted, and the plans be approved by Public Works Traffic Engineering
  4. Final Utility Plan shall be approved by Saint Paul Regional Water Services
  5. Lots shall be combined with Ramsey County Records and Mapping
- ▶ Appellant is proposing additional conditions (see March 4 letter):
  1. Enroll the development in the City of Saint Paul 4(d) Affordable Housing Incentive Program for a period of ten years whereby 50% of the units will be restricted to 60% AMI rental and income thresholds less applicable utility allowances
  2. Commit to a rooftop solar array to provide electricity for resident consumption
  3. commit to a historically significant public art or public improvement installation by a locally commissioned artist