

From: [Butler, Sonja \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary](#)
Subject: FW: 695 Grand Ave
Date: Thursday, June 24, 2021 3:04:09 PM

From: Arlana Vaughan <arlana.avaspecial@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 24, 2021 2:01 PM
To: Butler, Sonja (CI-StPaul) <sonja.butler@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: 695 Grand Ave

Think Before You Click: This email originated **outside** our organization.

I do not agree with the recent proposal at 695 Grand Ave..
Not in line with the neighborhood. Ugly ugly Ugly.. too big iii please stay within the current zoning rules. I have been a resident for 40 years. It will be an eyesore for generations to come. Strongly oppose!!

Arlana Vaughan
1011 Lincoln Ave
Saint paul, Mn 55105
612-408-6781

ZLU/SHA Committee Members,

I oppose the 695 Grand project as it currently stands. I believe it is ultimately too big for its surroundings. I submitted a previous letter but would like to further comment in response to the June 8 public meeting.

Some of the discussion mentioned exclusionary zoning as the end goal of those who live close to and oppose this project. As there is no affordable housing involved in this project, this does not make sense. If there is an element of exclusion here, it could be argued that the developer and property owner will accomplish that by catering to those who can afford high rent and expensive parking rates. I can understand why businesses would like to attract these new residents, who will have more disposable income, but this is no less self-serving than wanting to preserve the livability of your immediate surroundings. There should be a compromise, a project that will both maintain livability within the current zoning rules and attract diverse customers to our wonderful Grand Avenue businesses.

There was another suggestion that this project will mitigate climate change. Between the egregious lack of green space, the additional car traffic it will bring, and the maxed-out big box design of the building, I fail to see even one nod to climate change mitigation here. If the goal was a climate friendly building, then it might include, at the very least, more green space on all sides and levels and incentives for residents who do not have cars.

I live on a street where the buildings are all multi-family structures. Maybe our street can serve as a model for appropriately-sized development, inclusive zoning, and climate change mitigation.

Respectfully,

Brenda Besser
24 St. Albans S.

From: [Pereira, Luis \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary](#)
Subject: FW: Project proposal for 695 Grand Avenue
Date: Thursday, June 17, 2021 9:12:24 AM

From: Christopher Tyndall <tyndallchristopher@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 17, 2021 8:57 AM
To: Pereira, Luis (CI-StPaul) <Luis.Pereira@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Cc: Butler, Sonja (CI-StPaul) <sonja.butler@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Project proposal for 695 Grand Avenue

Think Before You Click: This email originated **outside** our organization.

Dear Mr. Pereira,

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed construction project for 695 Grand Avenue in its current form. I am a resident of the Como Park neighborhood in Saint Paul but am a frequent visitor to the area around the site of the proposed project. First of all, I should point out that I am a strong proponent of creating in our city increased options for "high-density" living. The environmental and social costs of our sprawling patterns of development are too high, and it is time to encourage new sorts of development that allow residents to live healthy and meaningful lives without wasting an abundance of land and natural resources to achieve this goal. The currently-proposed apartment building and the restaurants it would house might seem at first glance to represent a development project that lives up to the ideal I have suggested here. Unfortunately, I am strongly doubtful that this is the case.

Entirely missing from the vast majority of discussions about "high-density" housing is the implied goal of such development, which should be something much more along the lines of "high-density lifestyle." This higher-density lifestyle would allow residents to live a greater part of their lives closer to home, to waste less time just getting from one remote location in the metro area to another, to interact more with their neighbors living around them and to consume fewer of the world's natural resources in so doing. The problem with the current proposal is that it does nothing to promote this changed lifestyle. Whether there is one family living at 695 Grand Avenue or one thousand, the fact of the matter is that the neighborhood and transportation resources remain the same as before. There is no reason why the tenants of the proposed apartment building will use transit alternatives any more than any of the other residents of the neighborhood. There is no reason why they will seek jobs close to home or shop close to home. What will happen is that an enormous number of residents living in an over-sized apartment building will be living a "low-density lifestyle" based on driving great distances by car away from home either for work, shopping or for general recreation. The building as it is proposed will only increase vehicle traffic to the area, with the associated increases in noise and pollution, as residents drive in and out of the location and an endless number of commercial and delivery cars and trucks deliver food for the restaurants or Amazon and Fed-ex

packages to the residents. And while a few of the building tenants might occasionally choose to dine close to home in one of the building restaurants, the vast majority of patrons will drive in from far away, just as has always been the case with the restaurants at this location.

True high-density housing needs to be part of a coordinated plan so that not only is housing offered to residents, but other important resources they need for their daily lives are also offered as well. High-density housing needs to be promoted as part of a coordinated plan that truly leads to a change in our low-density lifestyle.

Thank you very much for considering my views as you make your recommendations in regard to this project.

Sincerely,

Christopher R. Tyndall

Siegworth, Emma (CI-StPaul)

From: Butler, Sonja (CI-StPaul)
Sent: Monday, June 21, 2021 8:06 AM
To: Siegworth, Emma (CI-StPaul)
Cc: Pereira, Luis (CI-StPaul)
Subject: FW: Project Proposal for 695 Grand Avenue

Forwarded to Emma.

-----Original Message-----

From: Christopher Tyndall <tyndallchristopher@yahoo.com>
Sent: Saturday, June 19, 2021 1:44 PM
To: Pereira, Luis (CI-StPaul) <Luis.Pereira@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; Pereira, Luis (CI-StPaul) <Luis.Pereira@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Cc: Butler, Sonja (CI-StPaul) <sonja.butler@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Project Proposal for 695 Grand Avenue

Think Before You Click: This email originated outside our organization.

Dear Mr. Pereira,

This letter represents further elaboration on comments regarding the above project that I sent to you last week. I feel very strongly about development in this area of Grand Avenue, and I hope you will also give these additional comments your serious attention.

Grand Avenue is one of the few areas of the Twin Cities Metro Area with a very distinct architectural and developmental aesthetic. The moderately-proportioned buildings and ample sidewalks provide a pleasant environment for shopping, dining out and carrying out other forms of recreation or the simple activities of daily life. Grand Avenue is one of the few areas in the Metro Area where pedestrians actually represent a visible presence, and the environment is not completely dominated by motor vehicles.

The proposed structure for 695 Grand Avenue makes not the slightest effort to acknowledge in its design the existing aesthetic and patterns of usage of the surrounding neighborhood. The high, rectangular structure is in stark contrast with all of the other surrounding buildings. Grand Avenue is a desirable destination in great part because of its unique and characteristic atmosphere. There is long-term cultural and economic value in trying to defend and preserve its particular aesthetic.

But there are very practical considerations as well which make this project objectionable in its current form. The high, vertical sides of the structure, pushed right up to the margins of the sidewalk, leave little open space for the comfortable movement of pedestrians, leaving them feeling confined and claustrophobic. Not of indifferent consideration is also the fact that exhaust from passing and idling vehicles has no room to dissipate and will create an ever-present cloud in front of the building that pedestrians will be forced to walk through. All research shows that the health effects of exposure to automobile exhaust are worst in close proximity to street traffic (see, for example, summaries of this research posted by the Health Effects Institute). As I already stated in my previous letter, the building will serve to increase vehicular traffic in an already over-burdened area. This consideration also deserves a moment of reflection. Despite education efforts by city officials aimed at both drivers and pedestrians, a very significant number of pedestrians on Grand Avenue continue to jay walk, and a very significant number of drivers still do not stop for pedestrians in crosswalks. Increasing vehicular traffic on and around this stretch of Grand Avenue only makes this dangerous situation even more potentially deadly. Our long-term goals for Grand Avenue should be to create an environment that reflects its rich history, is pleasing to look at and is welcoming and safe for foot traffic so that people can move about freely without there being risks to life or limb. None of these goals would deny opportunities for businesses in the area. On the contrary, they will guarantee a future supply of customers, for these developmental goals will truly turn Grand Avenue into a unique destination, both for residents of the neighborhood as well as visitors from outside (hopefully arriving by bus or bike).

Thank you again for your attention to this very important matter.

Sincerely,

Christopher R. Tyndall

Siegworth, Emma (CI-StPaul)

From: Pereira, Luis (CI-StPaul)
Sent: Monday, June 7, 2021 8:27 AM
To: Siegworth, Emma (CI-StPaul)
Subject: FW: Grand Ave

Not sure if this is too late but fyi.

From: Diane Ferreira <dferreira3502@comcast.net>
Sent: Monday, June 7, 2021 6:16 AM
To: Pereira, Luis (CI-StPaul) <Luis.Pereira@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Grand Ave

Think Before You Click: This email originated **outside** our organization.

Subject: 695 Grand Avenue Development Proposal

I am opposed to the development of the Dixie's/Emmetts/Saji Ya location as proposed.

I want to:

- **Strengthen and add to existing density and housing options at a compatible scale**
 - Add housing density to grow and revitalize Grand Avenue
- **Strengthen and add to economic diversity of housing options Summit Hill**
 - Support a mix of multifamily housing choices
- **Strengthen and add to economic vitality of Grand Ave, Summit Hill and Saint Paul**
 - Support small businesses

I oppose:

- **New construction that fails to transition to existing areas of the neighborhood**
 - Oversize structures that do not follow existing zoning codes undermine value of existing residences
- **New development that will alter the essential character of the neighborhood**
 - Bringing in a building design better suited for suburban areas detracts from the unique character of the neighborhood
- **Establishing a precedent that leads to further projects that degrades the area's charm**
 - Developments need to complement the eclectic nature of the area

The plans fail to protect the character of the Summit Hill neighborhood.

Please vote against the Dixie's/695 Project's requests to be given exceptions from existing zoning codes.

I want balanced development that respects the historic nature and character of the neighborhood.

Thank you.

Sent from my iPhone

Siegworth, Emma (CI-StPaul)

From: Butler, Sonja (CI-StPaul)
Sent: Thursday, June 10, 2021 10:25 AM
To: Siegworth, Emma (CI-StPaul)
Cc: Pereira, Luis (CI-StPaul)
Subject: FW: 695 Grand Avenue

From: Ellen T Brown <ellen@thebrownpartners.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 10, 2021 10:24 AM
To: Butler, Sonja (CI-StPaul) <sonja.butler@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Cc: Ari Parritz <aparritz@reuterwalton.com>
Subject: 695 Grand Avenue

Think Before You Click: This email originated outside our organization.

I am not sure I will be able to attend the Planning Commission meeting when it considers 695 Grand Avenue. Please provide these comments to the Commission members and enter into the public record. Thanks.

.....

I have been extremely disappointed in the opposition to this project that is being so vehemently expressed in the Summit Hill Association meetings. I have to believe that most of those opposed are St Albans neighbors or very nearby.

It is very troubling that there is no transparency about the addresses of the commenters, both pro and con. Anticipating the same opponents testifying to the Planning Commission, I hope note will be taken of opponents' addresses when evaluating the project.

As a strong proponent, I have said many times that I'm sure I wouldn't be as enthusiastic if I lived on St Albans. But the benefits to the Summit Hill neighborhood and to St Paul must take precedence over the personal impacts on a small cohort.

Those benefits, in a nutshell:

- bringing new residents to keep a struggling Grand Avenue commercially successful;
- viable options for Summit Hill empty nesters to downsize without abandoning the neighborhood, and thus freeing up large homes for new families; and
- providing a much needed property tax boost to the City.

The building design is well-suited to its proposed location: brick facade, architectural details and a major setback in the middle of the Grand Ave side in keeping with the historic mixed-use area; entry/exits for cars carefully planned; truck loading zone conflicts addressed; active retail space fronting Grand. Plus, a local owner who really cares about the neighborhood.

The developer has bent over backwards to address neighborhood concerns, far more than I've ever seen in any other projects. Sure, 4 floors might be better in some ways but it won't work financially and that must be accepted rather than wishfully imagined.

I hope the Planning Commission will recommend the 695 Grand proposal to the City Council for approval.

Sincerely,
Ellen (and Peter) Brown

874 Fairmount Avenue
Saint Paul MN 55105 Ellen T Brown
874 Fairmount Avenue
Saint Paul MN 55105
651-226-3692

From: [Butler, Sonja \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul_PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary](#)
Subject: FW: 695 Grand Avenue Development Proposal
Date: Thursday, June 24, 2021 3:03:31 PM

From: Elysia Gallo <elysiagallos@yahoo.com>

Sent: Thursday, June 24, 2021 3:01 PM

To: ZLU@SummitHillAssociation.org; info@SummitHillAssociation.org;

luiserangelmorales@gmail.com; simon.taghioff@gmail.com; Pereira, Luis (CI-StPaul)

<Luis.Pereira@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; Butler, Sonja (CI-StPaul) <sonja.butler@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; Noecker, Rebecca (CI-StPaul) <Rebecca.Noecker@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Subject: 695 Grand Avenue Development Proposal

Think Before You Click: This email originated **outside** our organization.

Dear Recipients and Decision Makers,
I'm writing to voice my opposition to the development of the Dixie's/Emmett's/Saji Ya location as proposed. Here are my comments, from a long-time resident. I've been renting in Summit Hill for 16 years, and back in the '90s, when I was a Mac-Groveland resident, my first two jobs in high school were on Grand Ave.

I have been attending meetings on this and disappointed that it is still moving forward as designed despite input from the community. From what I saw in the [listening session report](#) and the [neighborhood plan survey](#) (both available at <https://www.summithillassociation.org/comprehensive-plan-update> if you don't trust my links), it appears that people want more **affordable housing**. They want more **racial equity**. The only people who wanted unregulated development were the business owners. (And unregulated development will not do anything to increase affordable housing or racial equity.) Yes, they have money, but they are not the ones who live in this neighborhood. Maybe they'll get more customers, but they may at the same time harm the neighborhood and drive people away in this short-sighted move to change the fabric of Grand Ave. I support the East Grand Ave. overlay. I saw strong support for it in the survey. I was very disappointed by the SHA vote last week bowing down to developers. I read through the comments and attended a couple of meetings on it, and the neighbors were overwhelmingly opposed.

I have to tell you, it is beyond frustrating to attend these Zoom meetings where our concerns are simply not heard, or talked over. Please listen to what residents are telling you, and give us your full support as our representatives. Development simply for the sake of development is an unthinking reaction to buzzwords at best, and a grab-the-money-and-go situation at worst. We have plenty of density here--45% of residents here are renters, mainly in housing denser than single-family homes--and

while we could use more, it shouldn't be forced upon us in an unwelcome design.

Not only will the proposed structure not fit with the scale and personality of the neighborhood, this type of "density" is not going to increase diversity or equity in our neighborhood. The rent for an "alcove" (studio) is more than my current rent for a 2BR; a 2BR in this new development would rent for nearly \$3,000 a month. (Plus heat which is normally covered in rent, plus \$175/month for a single parking spot) The huge building will not even have enough parking spots to provide one per unit! Which means residents and employees alike will be parking up the narrow side streets, making it more difficult for visitors to access nearby businesses.

We don't need more luxury housing here -- if you had \$3,000 a month, you could likely buy a home here, with a garage and ample parking. What we need is the "Missing Middle" -- more multi-family homes on the scale of: duplexes, triplexes, small condos, townhomes, etc. We don't need something that would fit better on Snelling or University, where streets are much wider. (Snelling has an average street width of 80-100 feet, and University is even wider at 120 feet. Grand Avenue is much narrower, with just 54 feet curb to curb. St Albans, a one-way street, is only 38 feet, and would provide the exit to their parking lot.)

A design for a building should respond to its context. The development proposed by ESG and Reuter Walton for the Dixies on Grand is a cookie-cutter zombie, the exact same design developers keep plopping down in countless communities, regardless of context. If you grant them a spot exception to all the zoning laws that preserve the charm and density of our neighborhood, that will open the door to other greedy investors to propose more and more large, ugly, unappealing and unaffordable housing.

I have found this website (A Better Way St. Paul) to be very helpful in putting the development in context with facts, logical articulation, deep knowledge of local history and community planning, and well-researched arguments; I hope you will visit it to learn more about the Missing Middle as well as the historic charm of our neighborhood before making any decisions. (On the home page there is also an email to contact the people who put the site up -- I am not one of them nor do I speak for them, but I am in agreement with the majority of what you'll see on this site.)

<https://abetterway-stp.com/>

We need you to really think about what makes sense for this neighborhood on all levels and what will make our neighborhood actually better in the future. Summit Hill is a unique and beautiful jewel of a neighborhood in St. Paul; choose what's best for it, and all of St. Paul benefits in perceived desirability. What we need are more affordable options that provide homes to a variety of working and retired families, not luxury investment units. We need a safe and walkable city, not a behemoth that will force people to search for parking and have blind garage exits just feet from the sidewalk where pedestrians and children travel. We need to encourage development, yes -- but development at a scale that is compatible with OUR neighborhood, not University, not Snelling, not Minneapolis.

Thank you,
Elysia Gallo
1022 Osceola
renter / avid walker / patron of Grand Ave businesses

From: [Elysia Gallo](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul_PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary](#)
Subject: Public Testimony to Planning Commission RE: ZF # 21-271-810 ZF# 21-269-061
Date: Friday, June 25, 2021 9:18:44 AM

Dear Recipients and Decision Makers,
I'm writing to voice my opposition to the development of the Dixie's/Emmett's/Saji Ya location as proposed. Here are my comments, from a long-time resident. I've been renting in Summit Hill for 16 years, and back in the '90s, when I was a Mac-Groveland resident, my first two jobs in high school were on Grand Ave.

I have been attending meetings on this and disappointed that it is still moving forward as designed despite input from the community. From what I saw in the [listening session report](#) and the [neighborhood plan survey](#) (both available at <https://www.summithillassociation.org/comprehensive-plan-update> if you don't trust my links), it appears that people want more **affordable housing**. They want more **racial equity**. The only people who wanted unregulated development were the business owners. (And unregulated development will not do anything to increase affordable housing or racial equity.) Yes, they have money, but they are not the ones who live in this neighborhood. Maybe they'll get more customers, but they may at the same time harm the neighborhood and drive people away in this short-sighted move to change the fabric of Grand Ave. I support the East Grand Ave. overlay. I saw strong support for it in the survey. I was very disappointed by the SHA vote last week bowing down to developers. I read through the comments and attended a couple of meetings on it, and the neighbors were overwhelmingly opposed.

I have to tell you, it is beyond frustrating to attend these Zoom meetings where our concerns are simply not heard, or talked over. Please listen to what residents are telling you, and give us your full support as our representatives. Development simply for the sake of development is an unthinking reaction to buzzwords at best, and a grab-the-money-and-go situation at worst. We have plenty of density here--45% of residents here are renters, mainly in housing denser than single-family homes--and while we could use more, it shouldn't be forced upon us in an unwelcome design.

Not only will the proposed structure not fit with the scale and personality of the neighborhood, this type of "density" is not going to increase diversity or equity in our neighborhood. The rent for an "alcove" (studio) is more than my current rent for a 2BR; a 2BR in this new development would rent for nearly \$3,000 a month. (Plus heat which is normally covered in rent, plus \$175/month for a single parking spot) The huge building will not even have enough parking spots to provide one per unit!

Which means residents and employees alike will be parking up the narrow side streets, making it more difficult for visitors to access nearby businesses.

We don't need more luxury housing here -- if you had \$3,000 a month, you could likely buy a home here, with a garage and ample parking. What we need is the "Missing Middle" -- more multi-family homes on the scale of: duplexes, triplexes, small condos, townhomes, etc. We don't need something that would fit better on Snelling or University, where streets are much wider. (Snelling has an average street width of 80-100 feet, and University is even wider at 120 feet. Grand Avenue is much narrower, with just 54 feet curb to curb. St Albans, a one-way street, is only 38 feet, and would provide the exit to their parking lot.)

A design for a building should respond to its context. The development proposed by ESG and Reuter Walton for the Dixies on Grand is a cookie-cutter zombie, the exact same design developers keep plopping down in countless communities, regardless of context. If you grant them a spot exception to all the zoning laws that preserve the charm and density of our neighborhood, that will open the door to other greedy investors to propose more and more large, ugly, unappealing and unaffordable housing.

I have found this website (A Better Way St. Paul) to be very helpful in putting the development in context with facts, logical articulation, deep knowledge of local history and community planning, and well-researched arguments; I hope you will visit it to learn more about the Missing Middle as well as the historic charm of our neighborhood before making any decisions. (On the home page there is also an email to contact the people who put the site up -- I am not one of them nor do I speak for them, but I am in agreement with the majority of what you'll see on this site.)

<https://abetterway-stp.com/>

We need you to really think about what makes sense for this neighborhood on all levels and what will make our neighborhood actually better in the future. Summit Hill is a unique and beautiful jewel of a neighborhood in St. Paul; choose what's best for it, and all of St. Paul benefits in perceived desirability. What we need are more affordable options that provide homes to a variety of working and retired families, not luxury investment units. We need a safe and walkable city, not a behemoth that will force people to search for parking and have blind garage exits just feet from the sidewalk

where pedestrians and children travel. We need to encourage development, yes -- but development at a scale that is compatible with OUR neighborhood, not University, not Snelling, not Minneapolis.

Thank you,
Elysia Gallo
1022 Osceola
renter / avid walker / patron of Grand Ave businesses

Siegworth, Emma (CI-StPaul)

From: Butler, Sonja (CI-StPaul)
Sent: Monday, June 14, 2021 4:24 PM
To: Siegworth, Emma (CI-StPaul)
Subject: FW: 695 Grand Avenue Development Project
Attachments: Response to Application Narrative.pdf

From: grtodd@comcast.net <grtodd@comcast.net>
Sent: Saturday, June 12, 2021 10:30 AM
To: aquanettaa@gmail.com; tramhoang.sppc@gmail.com; blindeke@gmail.com; gmcmurtrey07@gmail.com; k.mouacheupao@gmail.com; aperryman@genesysworks.org; mieeta@gmail.com; Jeff.risberg@gmail.com; wendyLunderwood@gmail.com; zhijun.yang@metrostate.edu; Pereira, Luis (CI-StPaul) <Luis.Pereira@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; Butler, Sonja (CI-StPaul) <sonja.butler@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: 695 Grand Avenue Development Project

Think Before You Click: This email originated outside our organization.

Planning Commission,

I have attended several meetings of the Summit Hill Association Board and Zoning and Land Use Committee related to the proposed development at 695 Grand Avenue. There are several points I'd like to highlight and ask that you'd take into consideration as you vote on this proposal.

Recent Summit Hill/District 16 Neighborhood Survey confirms:

https://www.summithillassociation.org/s/SurveyDataAnalysis_Draft20210606-2200.pdf

- Q6 - Greatest strength of neighborhood - (by more than 2 to 1 over second place)
 - Beauty/Historic Charm/Architecture/old homes/small town feel
- Q20 – The historical buildings and features of the neighborhood attract new residents, visitors, and business to the neighborhood.
 - 89% voted Strongly Agree or Agree
- Q26 – The East Grand Avenue Overlay District
 - 78% voted that the EGOD is VALUABLE!
 - 50% voted – This is a valuable way to maintain character of our neighborhood.
 - 28% voted – This is valuable but needs some changes.
 - 14% voted – This won't serve our needs in the future.
 - 9% voted – I have no feelings about this.
 - This 695 Grand proposal is petitioning the City to completely exempt their project from the existing zoning codes in the EGOD. The neighbors (per the

survey) think this zoning code is still a valuable tool to protect the neighborhood from generic architecture and from losing its' greatest strength.

- This is spot zoning of the type forbidden by federal regulation(s) deferred to in the applicable Minnesota Statute. It is not being undertaken as part of comprehensive zoning and would be done primarily to benefit the property owner. This amounts to an unjustified exception to the existing zoning codes that would be inconsistent with the surrounding uses and create an island of non-conforming use withing the EGOD.

Also, attached is a document that is a response to the narrative submitted with the rezoning, CUP and variance requests. I felt that there was a need to respond as some of the justification amounted to simply alleging that the project will 'fit'. Allegations, especially ones that ignore other existing data, should not be treated as facts.

Thank you for your work for the City of St. Paul.
GRT

Gary R. Todd
682 Summit Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55105
grtodd@comcast.net
651-470-4720 – cell

"The best music forgets that it's being sung.
It comes naturally."
Apeirogon by Colum McCann

Siegworth, Emma (CI-StPaul)

From: Pereira, Luis (CI-StPaul)
Sent: Monday, June 7, 2021 8:43 AM
To: Siegworth, Emma (CI-StPaul)
Subject: FW: 695 Grand Proposal
Attachments: Images from Reuter-Walton and ESG Architects portfolio.pdf

Another one.

From: grtodd@comcast.net <grtodd@comcast.net>
Sent: Monday, June 7, 2021 8:40 AM
To: Pereira, Luis (CI-StPaul) <Luis.Pereira@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: 695 Grand Proposal

Think Before You Click: This email originated outside our organization.

Luis,

The 695 Grand – Land Use Application Narrative, submitted by the developers, states that their building design “will be contemporary with nods to its historic context and surrounding neighborhood character.”

In reviewing the portfolios of Reuter-Walton and ESG Architecture & Design’s other projects (see attached), I found at least 5 other developments that are similar in scale and use the same architecture. Since the design is the same, how does the proposed design for 695 Grand show respect to the historic nature and character of the Summit Hill neighborhood? It seems to be simply replicating the design that is being used in multiple other locations. It is aimed more to transform the character of the neighborhood to look the same as many others rather than to complement the Summit/Grand “brand” which is why people come to this area to visit, shop, eat, walk and live.

They are asking to rezone to T3 and be removed from the East Grand Overlay District so they can exceed the limits of the current zoning. They are asking for a CUP so they can exceed the height limits of T3 and they are asking for a variance so they can exceed the setback limits on Grand Avenue. Why do we have zoning codes if we do not require developers to follow any of them?

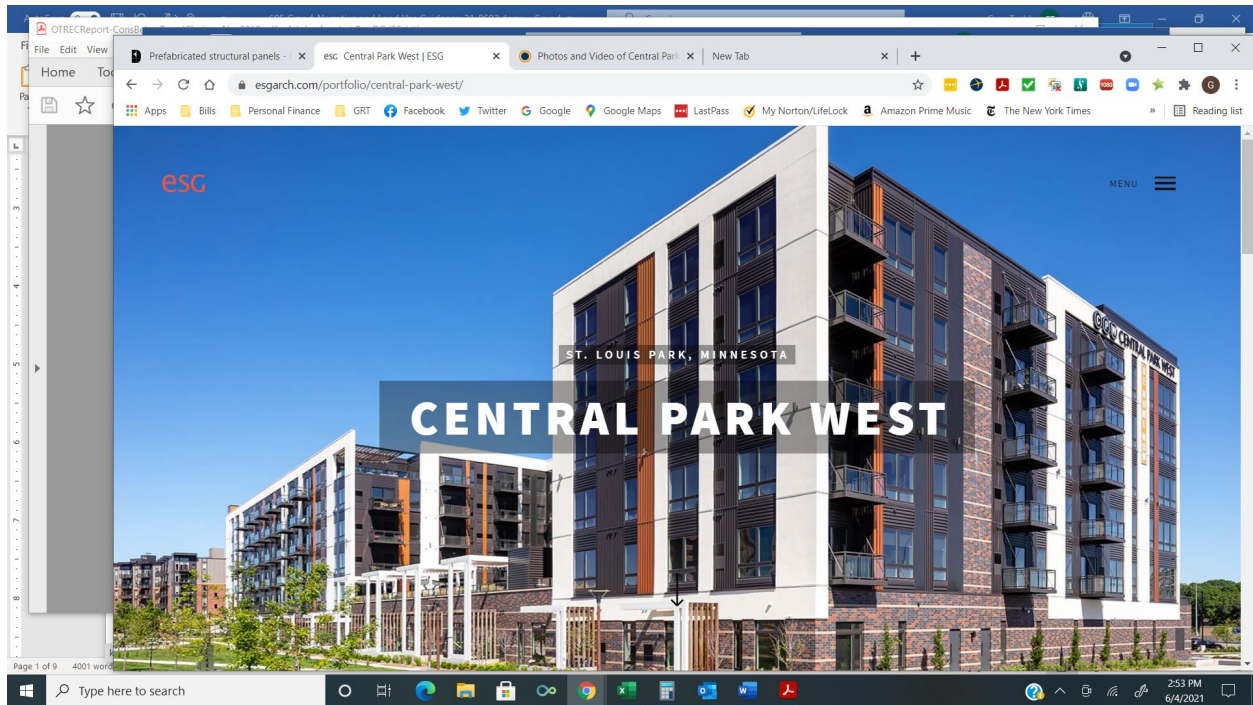
I would strong advocate that you and the Planning Commission vote against this project as proposed, especially in light of the fact that they are asking to throw out all current zoning codes to enable them to build this in our neighborhood.

Thank you.

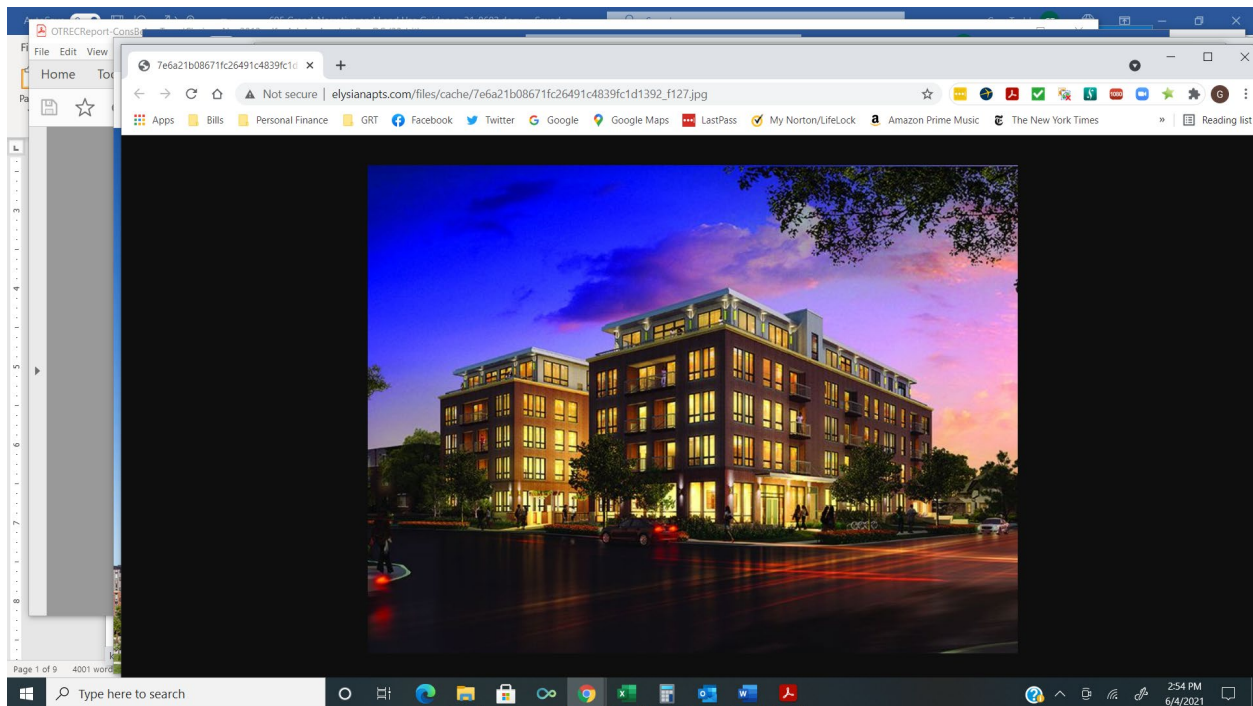
GRT

Gary R. Todd
682 Summit Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55105
grtodd@comcast.net
651-470-4720 – cell

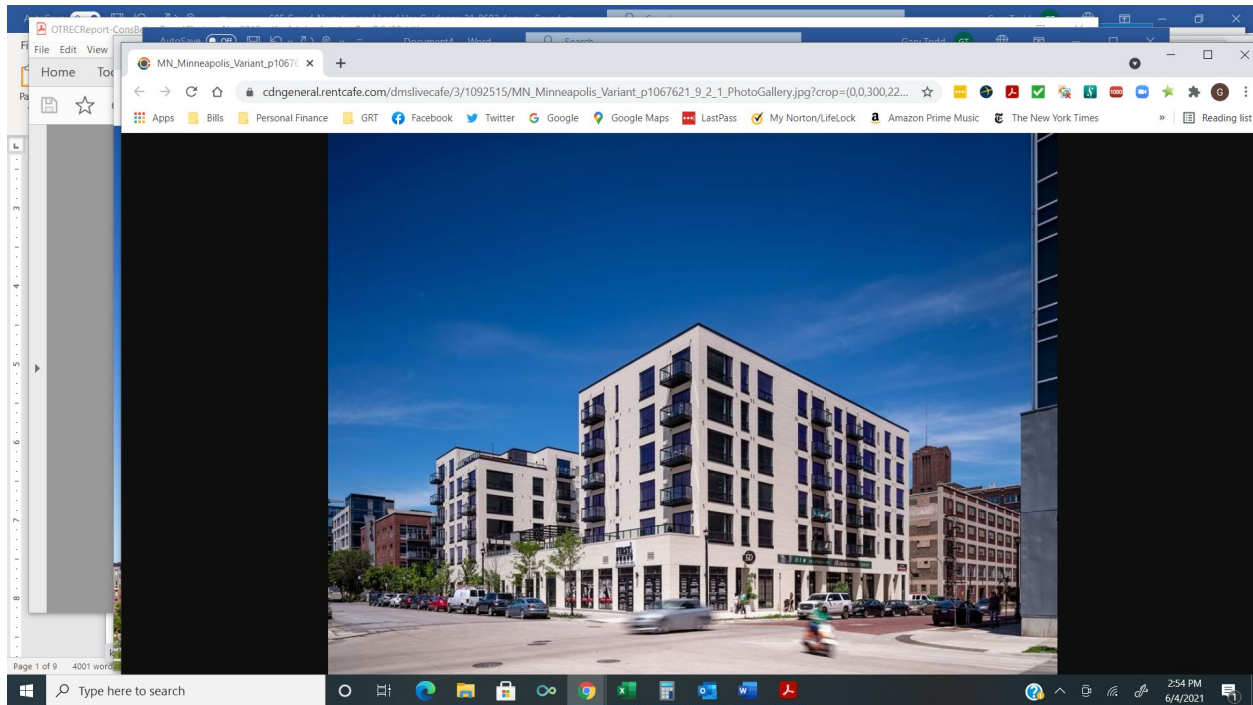
“The best music forgets that it’s being sung.
It comes naturally.”
Apeirogon by Colum McCann



Central Park West – St. Louis Park



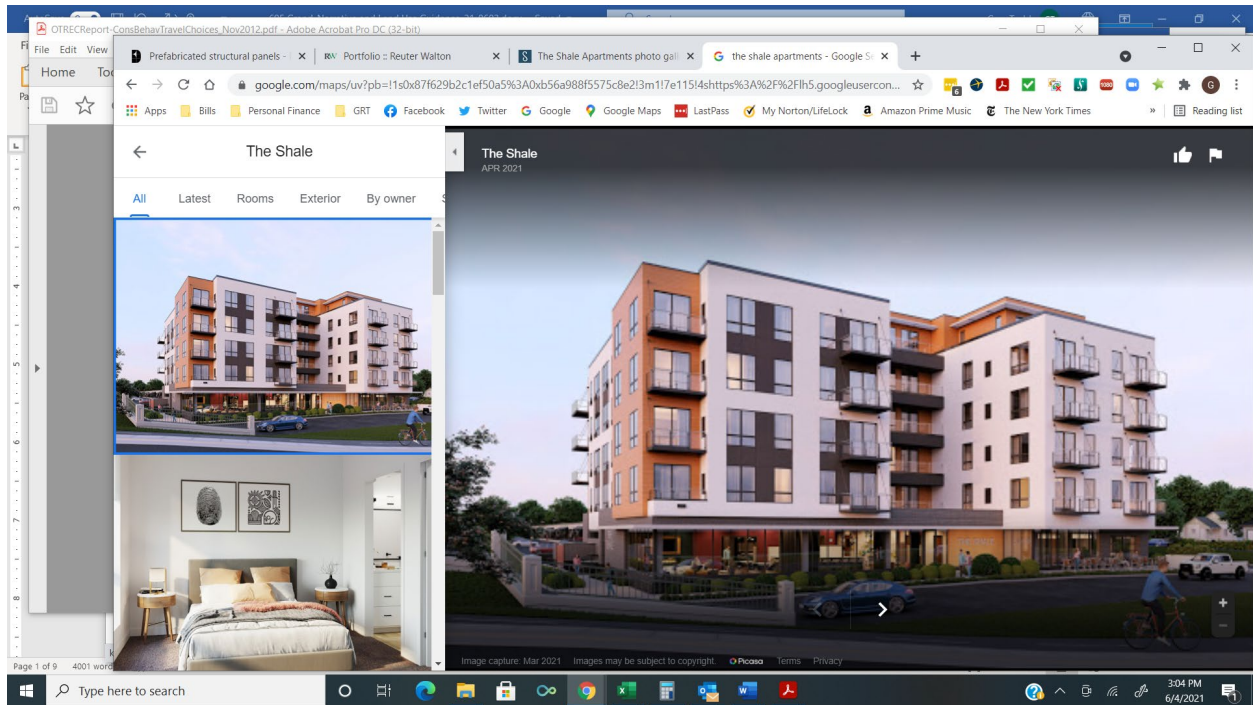
The Elysian Apartments – 4th Street Mpls



Variant Apartments – Warehouse District Mpls



Marquee in Loring Park



The Shale Apartments – Hiawatha Avenue – Mpls

From: [Butler, Sonja \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary](#)
Subject: FW: 695 Grand/ Dixies
Date: Friday, June 25, 2021 9:31:45 AM

From: Helene Smith <leniesmith1940@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, June 25, 2021 9:31 AM
To: Butler, Sonja (CI-StPaul) <sonja.butler@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: 695 Grand/ Dixies

Think Before You Click: This email originated **outside** our organization.

I oppose the zoning application for 695 Grand / Dixies .

LETTER OF OPPOSITION To Proposed Rezoning and Variance at 695 Grand Avenue

To: PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary@ci.stpaul.mn.us & emma.siegworth@ci.stpaul.mn.us

June 23, 2021

Dear Sirs,

I am Jeanne Kruchowski, a St. Paul home owner residing at 722 Summit Avenue, St Paul, MN 55105.

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed rezoning and variance for 695 Grand Avenue. My objections are the following:

- 1) The rezoning as proposed is not being undertaken as a part of comprehensive zoning and is intended primarily to permit the construction of the 5-story building planned by Saint Albans LLC for 695 Grand Avenue. This piecemeal approach is not the appropriate manner to institute or amend zoning in St. Paul.
- 2) When the necessity for exceeding the construction height permitted for the 695 Grand Avenue location was questioned, Ari Parritz of Reuter Walton has stated on multiple occasions that “the numbers simply do not work with a smaller development”. Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes § 462.357, Subd. 6, however, “Variances may be granted when the applicant for the variance establishes that there are practical difficulties in complying with the zoning ordinance...“ but“...Economic considerations alone do not constitute practical difficulties”. Therefore, the fact that Saint Albans LLC cannot make their numbers work with a smaller development is not a valid reason for the requested height variance to be granted.
- 3) The development as proposed by Saint Albans LLC at 695 Grand Avenue is incompatible with the City of Saint Paul’s vigorously enforced Heritage Preservation Ordinance (municipal code chapter 73). It is incomprehensible that while property owners nearby are held to strict guidelines – apparently for the purpose of preserving an area of special historical and aesthetic interest - the City would contemplate rezoning and granting variances that would permit construction at 695 Grand Avenue that would impact the historic, aesthetic, and financial value of the historic properties just a stone’s throw away on St. Albans Street and Summit Avenue.

Please DO NOT rezone the 695 Grand Avenue property or grant the variance(s) requested.

Respectfully,

JM Kruchowski

Siegworth, Emma (CI-StPaul)

From: Butler, Sonja (CI-StPaul)
Sent: Tuesday, June 8, 2021 12:47 PM
To: Siegworth, Emma (CI-StPaul)
Subject: FW: 695 Grand Avenue Development Proposal

From: Jessica Highland <jessica.a.highland@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 08, 2021 12:45 PM
To: Pereira, Luis (CI-StPaul) <Luis.Pereira@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; Butler, Sonja (CI-StPaul) <sonja.butler@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; Noecker, Rebecca (CI-StPaul) <Rebecca.Noecker@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: 695 Grand Avenue Development Proposal

Think Before You Click: This email originated outside our organization.

Hello,

I am opposed to the development of the Dixie's/Emmetts/Saji Ya location as proposed.

I want to:

- **Strengthen and add to existing density and housing options at a compatible scale**
 - Add housing density to grow and revitalize Grand Avenue
- **Strengthen and add to economic diversity of housing options Summit Hill**
 - Support a mix of multifamily housing choices
- **Strengthen and add to economic vitality of Grand Ave, Summit Hill and Saint Paul**
 - Support small businesses

I oppose:

- **New construction that fails to transition to existing areas of the neighborhood**
 - Oversize structures that do not follow existing zoning codes undermine value of existing residences
- **New development that will alter the essential character of the neighborhood**
 - Bringing in a building design better suited for suburban areas detracts from the unique character of the neighborhood
- **Establishing a precedent that leads to further projects that degrades the area's charm**
 - Developments need to complement the eclectic nature of the area

The plans fail to protect the character of the Summit Hill neighborhood.

Please vote against the Dixie's/695 Project's requests to be given exceptions from existing zoning codes.

I want balanced development that respects the historic nature and character of the neighborhood.

Thank you,

Jess Highland

28 Saint Albans St N #4

Siegworth, Emma (CI-StPaul)

From: Pereira, Luis (CI-StPaul)
Sent: Tuesday, June 8, 2021 6:20 AM
To: Siegworth, Emma (CI-StPaul)
Subject: Fwd: 695 Grand/Dixies proposal

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From: Keith Lindgren <klindgren82@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 8, 2021 1:40:46 AM
To: ZLU@summithillassociation.org <ZLU@summithillassociation.org>; info@summithillassociation.org <info@summithillassociation.org>; luiserangelmorales@gmail.com <luiserangelmorales@gmail.com>; simon.taghioff@gmail.com <simon.taghioff@gmail.com>; Pereira, Luis (CI-StPaul) <Luis.Pereira@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; Butler, Sonja (CI-StPaul) <sonja.butler@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; Noecker, Rebecca (CI-StPaul) <Rebecca.Noecker@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: 695 Grand/Dixies proposal

Think Before You Click: This email originated outside our organization.

All,

My name is Keith Lindgren, I am a new resident of Summit Hill. My wife and I moved here from downtown Minneapolis in March of this year. We love it here, and have found it to be varied and vibrant, from block to block as we enjoy finally being able to visit shops and restaurants after being vaccinated.

Please forgive me for writing this as a group email. As I am new to the neighborhood, I simply collected all the emails that I understood to be involved in the decision making around the planning and possible re-zoning of the Grand/Saint Albans corner. So this feels a bit impersonal, but I would love to chat with any/all of you on this topic, and about my new neighborhood in general.

While I am new to this neighborhood, I know all of the things about this neighborhood that guided us to move here, and it's safe to say the Reuter Walton proposal is the polar opposite of any of those things. I'm not naive, I understand that development is necessary, and I do expect to see change on that plot sooner rather than later. **But the proposed building design is antithetical to the character of the surrounding neighborhood.** This proposal would be unsuitable even if it were at an acceptable height, due to the clear contrast in style.

Reuter Walton's cynical 'take it or leave it' approach to this development as 'only possible if it is 5 stories' flies in the face of all the successful multi-use designs we see in other locations on Grand (and other nearby streets, for that matter). It frankly borders on gaslighting, and I don't understand why anyone would be willing to work with these people when they refuse to approach this development in good faith.

If anything, this proposal is a blindingly obvious example of exactly why zoning codes exist in the first place; to ensure the neighborhood doesn't get steamrolled by greedy developers. I strongly disagree with the premise that 'The final plans are the result of months of community engagement.' This proposal came in completely devoid of community engagement, and was cosmetically adjusted without addressing any of the most important concerns of the residents of Summit Hill.

I'm not sure if I'll be able to join the Tuesday evening meeting on this topic, so I wanted to make sure I communicated this before that conversation. Please do reach out if you have any questions for me, I would love to chat more on this topic.

Best regards,
Keith Lindgren

Siegworth, Emma (CI-StPaul)

From: Butler, Sonja (CI-StPaul)
Sent: Monday, June 14, 2021 4:25 PM
To: Siegworth, Emma (CI-StPaul)
Subject: FW: The four corners of Grand and Saint Albans: Correction to info from 695 Grand Development Team

From: Kucera Marit Lee <maritleekucera@comcast.net>
Sent: Friday, June 11, 2021 10:22 PM
To: ZLU@SummitHillAssociation.org; info@summithillassociation.org; Simon Taghioff <simon.taghioff@gmail.com>
Cc: Butler, Sonja (CI-StPaul) <sonja.butler@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; Pereira, Luis (CI-StPaul) <Luis.Pereira@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; Noecker, Rebecca (CI-StPaul) <Rebecca.Noecker@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; luiserangelmorales@gmail.com
Subject: The four corners of Grand and Saint Albans: Correction to info from 695 Grand Development Team

Think Before You Click: This email originated outside our organization.

Dear ZLU and SHA,

This letter is to correct misinformation repeatedly given by Bob Loken of ESG architectural firm for the Kennefick and Reuter Walton project at 695 Grand.

At three of the public Zoom meetings, Mr. Loken stated that one justification for the new 695 to come right up on the property lines on Grand and St. Albans is that the other buildings on the other three corners of the Saint Albans/Grand intersection, all come right up to the sidewalks. Only on the southeast corner, the dry cleaners, is this true.



ABOVE: On the southwest corner, the 3-story apartment building (682 Grand) abuts the sidewalk on the St. Albans side, but the Grand front-of-the-building has 12'8" of grass, scrubs, and trees. Since this used to be a bus stop, there is no boulevard of green grass.



ABOVE: To the west of 682 and directly across the street from the current Dixie's and Emmett's building are 694 and 696 Grand; both have a setback from the sidewalk of approximately 30', with a boulevard of 6'5". The 2-story residential buildings just west of 695 on the north side of Grand, are similar to these shown above, with a wide setback from the sidewalk.



ABOVE: On the northeast corner are two six-unit buildings (30 and 42 South Saint Albans, Fillmore and Walter Homeowner's Association, twelve owner-occupied condos since 1976), with enclosed screen porches that come up to the sidewalk, but there is a 26' wide garden from the south side of #42 South Saint Albans to the Grand sidewalk, running the entire length of the building, approximately 75'. DETAIL BELOW) This garden won an award from GABA in the 1990s as the best garden on Grand. The award came with a black/white photo of the two large stately houses, facing St. Albans, which once occupied what is now Dixie's/695.



BELOW: Plus there is a green garden space with a tree, flowering plants, and hostas, 26' wide x 9', between the two buildings, with parking for condo owners east of the fence.



I respectfully submit these pictures for the record. The contention of the 695/Dixie's development team that the footprint of nearby buildings justifies their to-the-lot-line/sidewalk design is not true; it is false.

Thank you to ZLU and SHA for all the time and efforts all have given to this 695 development project. As a 45+-year resident (both renter and owner), I urge you, please, be sure that all the "facts" given by the 695 Development Team are true, pertinent, valid, and verifiable.

I urge you to support the East Grand Avenue Overlay District guidelines.

Respectfully,
Marit Kucera
30 South Saint Albans

Siegworth, Emma (CI-StPaul)

From: Butler, Sonja (CI-StPaul)
Sent: Monday, June 14, 2021 8:19 AM
To: Siegworth, Emma (CI-StPaul)
Subject: FW: Proposed Development at 695 Grand Avenue

From: Lori Brostrom <lbrostrom@comcast.net>
Sent: Friday, June 11, 2021 7:11 PM
To: zlu@summithillassociation.org; Information Summit Hill Association <Info@summithillassociation.org>; Noecker, Rebecca (CI-StPaul) <Rebecca.Noecker@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; Pereira, Luis (CI-StPaul) <Luis.Pereira@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; luiserangelmorales@gmail.com
Cc: Butler, Sonja (CI-StPaul) <sonja.butler@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; #CI-StPaul_Ward2 <Ward2@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Proposed Development at 695 Grand Avenue

Think Before You Click: This email originated outside our organization.

The development as proposed for 695 Grand Avenue, with its requested variances and CUP, violates multiple sections of the St. Paul zoning code, does not meet most of the criteria for variances as set forth in same, violates established MN zoning law, and in general is grossly out of character in a neighborhood which is renowned for its historic character and charm, and a location which is literally surrounded by national- and state-designated historic districts. Per Visit St. Paul, Summit Hill is a central attraction to visitors ranging from large conventions to individuals for that reason, and thus, anything that detracts from that character—which this development and those that would surely follow if allowed to happen—would be harmful on multiple levels.

Please consider the following:

In 2006 the St. Paul City Council voted the East Grand Avenue Overlay District into the zoning code with overwhelming support from Summit Hill neighbors, who wanted to avoid additional high-density, out of scale development and prevent future developments such as the massive Oxford Hill building and the 6-story condo building erected on the corner of Grand and Grotto avenues. Summit Hill neighbors still support the overlay district—the recent survey that the Summit Hill Association completed showed:

- 89% strongly agree/agree that “The historical buildings and features of the neighborhood attract new residents, visitors, and business to the neighborhood.”
- 63% strongly agree/agree that “property owners and developers are able to make improvements, re-purpose, and build new properties in the neighborhood while staying within current historical preservation guidelines.”
- 49% of respondents feel that the overlay district is “a valuable way to maintain the character of our neighborhood” and another 28% generally believe its valuable with minor changes (unclear whether they want the district to be more vs. less restrictive) vs. just 14% who feel it won’t meet our needs in the future. This overwhelming support comes despite a correction that was made to the wording of the question for the first 21 days of the 34 total days that the survey was available from an initial version that was incorrect, misleading—and clearly biased against the overlay district, including in the unorthodox ordering of the potential responses which was unlike that of any of the other questions. With accurate and unbiased phrasing for this question throughout the survey’s open period, support would likely have been even greater.

Despite this, Kenefick et al have proposed a development which:

- Violates the overlay district—which mandates a maximum 3 stories/36’ height for mixed commercial and residential use and 25,000 sf footprint—with a 5-story/60’ tall building and 30,200 sf footprint.
- Would require T3 zoning, intended for “higher-density pedestrian- and transit-oriented mixed-use development” per the St. Paul zoning code and is grossly out of context in a primarily residential historic neighborhood, and the site on which it would sit, which is at the corner of a 1-way/1-traffic lane street (St. Albans) which is barely passable in the winter and 2-lane Grand Avenue.
 - Furthermore, even before Covid, ridership on the bus route servicing Grand was poor at best on an absolute basis and with net declines in onboardings and disembarkings between 2017 and 2019 on the East Grand Avenue section of the route in both directions.
 - Other than on Snelling and W 7th Street, the closest T3-zoned parcel is at the corner of Selby and Dale—both transit corridors—unlike this site on the corner of 1-way/1-lane St. Albans and 2-lane Grand, with a poorly-used bus route.
 - The addition of a CUP would make this even worse—and create a building which would be 67% taller than allowed under the East Grand Avenue Overlay District, and in comparison to nearby buildings in all directions.
- Would create massive negative parking and traffic impacts on St. Albans, Grand and the surrounding alleys compared to the current use due to only 99 parking spaces for 80 residential units and 11,079 sf of commercial use.
 - The current one-story commercial building on site, with three restaurants on a footprint of approximately half the size of the proposed development, has 51 off-street spaces for patrons and 9 for employees; even with that, there is considerable overflow parking on the street in an area where there is already a significant parking deficit. Assuming demand for residential parking of at least 1 space per unit (which is not realistic and doesn’t take into account guests), 19 off-street spaces for commercial customers and employees is wildly inadequate considering the current level of 60 spaces for establishment taking up half the proposed footprint.
 - The traffic generated by the current use already puts a strain on St. Albans at busy times, but at least is limited by the 4-5 busier hours/day. The larger amount of commercial space alone in the proposed development would create more traffic. However, with residents and guests of 80 residential units coming and going for several more hours a day, sometimes with multiple trips, will exacerbate this impact exponentially.
 - The impact of many more commercial trucks (food, supplier and merchandise deliveries), as well as what will likely be multiple other service delivery vehicles (Amazon, UPS, DHL, USPS and other restaurants, groceries and other tradespeople servicing 80 residential units) will make Grand Avenue almost impassable throughout the day and into the evening. While the plan to confine these deliveries to Grand Avenue and during daytime hours appears to be a much better solution vs. the current practice of alley deliveries, the reality is that there is no way to enforce this once the building is in place.
- Would increase property taxes with its higher valuation resulting from high-end market-rate rentals, making it even harder for the nearby naturally-occurring affordable housing—that the city needs and supposedly values—to survive.

Furthermore, the requested variances and CUP would clearly constitute spot zoning. According to multiple recent City of St. Paul Zoning Committee staff reports: Court rulings have determined that “spot zoning” is illegal in Minnesota. *Minnesota courts have stated that this term “applies to zoning changes, typically limited to small plots of land, which establish a use classification inconsistent with the surrounding uses and create an island of nonconforming use within a larger zoned property.”* Plannersweb.com, citing Anderson’s American Law of Zoning, 4th Edition, § 5.12 (1995), refers to spot zoning as “the process of singling out a small parcel of land for a use classification totally different from that of the surrounding area for the benefit of the owner of such property and to the detriment of other owners.” The City of St. Paul, on its webpage regarding nonconforming uses, states that the Planning Commission must find whether “Rezoning the property would result in “spot” zoning or a zoning inappropriate to the surrounding land uses.”

- As noted earlier, this proposed zoning would clearly be notably inconsistent with the surrounding use.

- The benefit of such rezoning would clearly accrue to the owner of this property to the detriment of the surrounding property owners.

Finally, if approved, this development would be found to **violate several of the six variance criteria** which the applicant needs to meet. Moreover, it also is **inconsistent in multiple areas with the 2040 Comprehensive Plan**.

One needs only to look at the **Uptown area of Minneapolis as a cautionary example**. A couple of decades ago, it was thought of in comparable terms to the Grand Avenue/Summit Hill area. That is no longer the case, as overweening greed and excessive development have replaced the charming, smaller-scale businesses in their vintage buildings, and accessible lower-density housing of the same vintage, with the types of charmless, banal mid-rise mixed use and residential buildings. The result: too much traffic, too little parking, fewer visitors and rents that are so high that the residents who live in these buildings can't afford to patronize area businesses, which in turn are struggling. The impact: large numbers of empty storefronts, a once-thriving commercial building (Calhoun Square) which is largely an empty shell, and an inability of established businesses to survive. Phil Roberts of Parasole Holdings stated, pre-pandemic in early 2018, that, "Uptown has changed. I don't know if it's people are house-poor because there's all those apartments being built. They're well-appointed with granite countertops and maybe a single bedroom is 1,900 bucks a month. Maybe that crowd just doesn't have the disposable income." Subsequently, Parasole closed their two area restaurants—Libertine and Chino Latino—in recognition of that dynamic. Thus, contrary to some beliefs, density is not a panacea and in fact, can be harmful.

Peter Kenefick says that he wants to create a legacy. This is not the kind of legacy that the neighborhood which has supported his family's restaurants for 40 years wants or needs. I, like most others, am all for development that is respectful of history, design context, the safety and well-being of the residents, and the zoning laws which support that. He owns the property on which he proposes to build—so he's already far ahead of the game compared to most developers—and by all accounts has had success with a single-story commercial building with three restaurants. He could easily build a 3-story mixed use building with condos—similar to the successful 2-story building across the street—that conforms to the overlay district mandates. The condos would sell out instantly, and his ownership of the first-floor commercial area would ensure his family's continuing presence and ability to create a much more valued legacy.

In conclusion, this development, if allowed to go ahead as proposed, would set **unimaginable precedents** for future development along Grand Avenue. With greatly-increased traffic and more demand for parking—in an area with a long-standing, documented high parking deficit already—and the resulting exacerbation of current pedestrian safety issues, there would be irreparable damage to the historic charm and neighborhood-like feel that residents clearly value and businesses—as demonstrated by an East Grand Avenue commercial landscape that is almost completely rented—benefits from.

Please defend and enforce the East Grand Avenue Overlay District and **deny the variances** being requested for this development.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Brostrom
710 Summit Avenue, Apt. 1



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June 10, 2021

To: Saint Paul Decision Makers

I have taken particular note that the 695 Grand Avenue development team has taken the position that the 695 Grand Avenue proposed project “fits into the existing neighborhood since there are two larger buildings in the vicinity. I assert that these comparisons are both invalid and disingenuous.

The extensive rezoning and variance requests of the 695 Grand Avenue development team simply flout the process of zoning and planning. Why are there planning and zoning guidelines if a developer can simply proceed as if they do not apply –and whatever the developer decides –will be best for any given neighborhood?

In order to build the 695 Grand Avenue project as designed, the 695-development team

1. Is requesting:
Rezoning from B2 to T3
2. Spot zoning out of the east grand avenue overlay district
3. CUP to exceed the height limit of T3
4. Variances so they can exceed the allowed setback between Grand and the restaurant space.

Exacerbating the situation is the fact the most recent response that Reuter Walton submitted to queries by ZLU SHA calls for an even higher building than the previous proposal. The building has ‘grown taller’. The top of the roof was 56-8 and now it’s 59-10.

The other two larger buildings in the area give far more ‘breathing room’ to the neighborhood in which they reside. And a comparison to these existing buildings is false and misleading.

1. Oxford Hill Condominium Development, built in 2005.
Not only is the 695 proposed building nearly twice the size of the existing Offord Hill Condominiums proposed 695 project, Oxford Hill Condominium Development is:

- I Generously separated from the alley by 56 feet.
- II Physically separated by a physical fence

I Steps down to integrate better with neighborhood

iii Is built on the south side of street so shadows are cast onto street

2. Grand Place

Built in 1981, prior to East Grand Overlay District zoning

- i. Tallest building on Grand Avenue –65 feet tall
- ii. Set back from Grand Avenue by approx. 30 feet
- iii. Set back on the East and West by 12 feet, and set back 26 feet from the alley
- iv. Built on the north side of street so this building casts shadow onto a parking lot

In contrast, the 695 project, basically “fills the available space” ---and cannot be fairly compared to these two buildings —which give ‘breathing room’ to the neighborhoods in which they reside. 695 Grand would be set back from an alley that is already treacherously icy in winter by a mere 8 feet—without a physical barrier between the proposed building and the alley.

The proposed 695 Grand Avenue project gives no ‘breathing room’ to the neighborhood in which it will reside and is a drastic intrusion into the historic and densest node of Summit hill --- the North West corner of Grand Avenue, a narrow two-way street and Saint Albans street south, a one-way street.

I strongly urge ZLUSHA to reject the zoning and variances request of the 695-development team

Marilyn Bach
9 Saint Albans Street South
Saint Paul, MN 55105

Siegworth, Emma (CI-StPaul)

From: Butler, Sonja (CI-StPaul)
Sent: Tuesday, June 8, 2021 2:57 PM
To: Siegworth, Emma (CI-StPaul)
Cc: Pereira, Luis (CI-StPaul)
Subject: FW: Letter supporting East Grand Avenue Overlay RE: 695 Grand/Dixie's
Attachments: Zoning Committeeletter.docx

From: Kucera Marit Lee <maritleekucera@comcast.net>
Sent: Tuesday, June 08, 2021 2:55 PM
To: Butler, Sonja (CI-StPaul) <sonja.butler@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; Pereira, Luis (CI-StPaul) <Luis.Pereira@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; ZLU@SummitHillAssociation.org; info@summithillassociation.org; Noecker, Rebecca (CI-StPaul) <Rebecca.Noecker@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; Simon Taghioff <simon.taghioff@gmail.com>; luiserangelmorales@gmail.com; Ari Parritz <aparritz@reuterwalton.com>
Subject: Letter supporting East Grand Avenue Overlay RE: 695 Grand/Dixie's

Think Before You Click: This email originated outside our organization.

8 June 2021

Attn: Planning and Economic Development Zoning Committee :

I have lived at the corner of Saint Albans and Grand for over 45 years. This is a great place to live and I want my street and East Grand to remain a great place to live for all who chose to live here, new and long-time residents as well as young and old residents.

For the record, I am all in favor of developing the 695 site. It needs it! But it needs to be done within the parameters of the East Grand Avenue Overlay (EGAOD). These zoning ordinances have served this neighborhood well for 15 years and still today are solid guiding principles for future development.

695 Grand is directly across Saint Albans Street from Fillmore and Walter Homeowners Association (FWHA), owner-occupied condos since 1976, at 30 and 42 South Saint Albans.

This block of Saint Albans, a very narrow street from Summit to Grand, has been a one-way since the early 1980s. All the residences on this block of Saint Albans are owner-occupied condos. Also, the block of Summit-Saint Albans-Grand-Dale is one of the densest populated blocks in all of Saint Paul. (<https://www.city-data.com/city/St.-Paul-Minnesota.html>)

I challenge the developers to show us an example of a building, preferably one of their buildings, in this metro area, as tall and as large, that is built so close to an adjacent, very narrow, residential street, plus a street with historic preservation landmarks. This block of Saint Albans is no ordinary side street.

1. Concerns: I have several concerns and questions about the proposed 695 development, but I will list only a few.

A. The size and the height (60') of the proposed building at 695 Grand is not compatible with the immediate neighborhood. It will be 50% higher than the two FWHA buildings across the street. FWHA's two buildings are each 40' tall.

B. Whereas the design calls for a visual set back from Grand on floors two to five in the center front of the building, there is no similar layering of the floors or set backs on Saint Albans to mitigate the fortress appearance of the east wall. Saint Albans deserves the same design considerations as Grand Avenue.

C. The architectural drawings, thus far revealed to the public, do not show any setback from the sidewalks for lawn or green space on the south (Grand) or east (Saint Albans) sides. As I understand, the proposed back of the building will have an 8' green space on the alley, which for most of the year will be in total shadow.

D. The new 695 Grand will not only be the largest edifice on the east end of Grand, it may well be the largest on all of Grand. It is certain to encourage more cookie-cutter, 5-over-1 developments to replace older tired buildings on Grand. Unfortunately 5-over-1 structures do not have the expected lifetime of the century-plus buildings prevalent in Summit Hill neighborhood.

2. Parking and Traffic The proposed building needs to adequately support the increase of resident density (80 units could potentially house upwards of 125-150 people) with adequate accompanying amenities such as parking.

A. Parking: currently in the plans there are

- no accommodation for 695 residents' guests,
- no planned accommodations for four restaurant/business employees
- insufficient onsite parking for patrons of the four businesses,
- no consideration for Saint Albans' current residential needs for on-street parking.

B. Parking for 695 residents is

- minimal and very high priced at projected \$175/month.
- the in-building route for residents to their underground parking stalls is very arduous.
- the overlapping in/out routes for patron parking and resident parking are confusing and a disaster in the making.

C. The use of narrow, one-way Saint Albans as the entrance/exit for residential underground parking (and exit for commercial patron parking), plus trash and recycling pick-up, will create huge traffic snarls on Saint Albans. How many trash pick-ups per week? Amount of time needed for these pick-ups. Traffic will be blocked/stopped during these pick-ups.

D. How many car accidents will occur when 695 residents take a mad-dash shortcut, going the wrong way (north) from Grand to get to their underground parking places?
As it is now, there are several cars that daily disregard/disrespect the one-way signs.

E. Our car insurance rates, already some of the highest in the state, are sure to rise because we now we live on a street with increased fender-benders.

3. Reducing the width of the boulevard (from the street to the sidewalk)

- will not allow room for stately tall trees, which provide shade, charm, livability, and help filter the air.
- will mean that the snow banks will spill over onto the sidewalk.

4. How will the new 695 insure that its tenants have the same (or even some of the) charms for which Grand Avenue is so well known and which now attracts so many people to want to live on/near Grand Avenue? What do the developers “owe” to their tenants when they (tenants) sign a lease? Living on Grand is more than a space with four walls with a Grand Avenue address. The developers will sell the existing charm, livability reputation, proximity to shops, plus the neighborhood vibrancy to entice people to live at 695, but will it still be here?

5. What is such a massive 60’ building going to do to the real estate value of adjacent condo properties? When we condo owners no longer have any sun or breezes reaching our porches? When our friends and family, who want to visit us, can no longer park anywhere near #30 and #42? I wonder what will happen to the charm, the desirability, the livability, and even the future salability of my condo. All these worries would not be issues with a three-story building at 695.

6. The new colossal 695 claims

- that it will put the “Grand” back into Grand Avenue by its massive height and size.

- that its massiveness is necessary to make it viable. The real legacy here is not to the Summit Hill neighborhood, but to the pocketbooks of the property owners and developers.

- that it is doing the greater Summit Hill neighborhood a favor. The thinking seems to be that a few neighbors will have to suffer (unfortunately, but....), but this is all in the good name of legacy and progress. I fail to see the democracy (or civic neighborliness) of this thinking.

If the proposed building cannot make money and also fit within the EGAOD guidelines, then it is not the right project for this area.

Respectfully submitted,

Marit Lee Kucera, 30 South Saint Albans

651-222-2483

Siegworth, Emma (CI-StPaul)

From: Butler, Sonja (CI-StPaul)
Sent: Friday, June 11, 2021 7:16 AM
To: Siegworth, Emma (CI-StPaul)
Subject: FW: 695 Grand proposal

-----Original Message-----

From: Pj Bensen <pjbensen@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 10, 2021 5:56 PM
To: Butler, Sonja (CI-StPaul) <sonja.butler@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: 695 Grand proposal

Think Before You Click: This email originated outside our organization.

Good evening Ms Butler-

I am writing to oppose the current proposal for development of the 695 Grand Ave site.

I wholeheartedly support development in the neighborhood, but believe this particular proposal is excessive. This proposal sets a dangerous precedent that will over time, erode the unique character of the Grand Avenue business and residential community. The design is too generic, too large, and it offers only minuscule transition(if that's what the corner cut at the alley is considered) to the existing neighborhood structures.

I love the existing restaurants and the potential for other businesses and increased density in line with the 2040 comprehensive plan. I would gladly support a proposal that is at or very close to compliance with the current zoning requirements that was thoughtfully implemented several years ago. This proposal is not that.

Please record my input as a NO to the current proposal by Peter Kennefick.

Thank You-
Pj Bensen
Summit Hill resident and homeowner
Sent from my iPhone

From: [Butler, Sonja \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary](#)
Subject: FW: 695 Grand/Dixies
Date: Thursday, June 24, 2021 3:03:55 PM

-----Original Message-----

From: PRISCILLA BREWSTER <prisbrewster@aol.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 24, 2021 2:08 PM
To: Butler, Sonja (CI-StPaul) <sonja.butler@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: 695 Grand/Dixies

Think Before You Click: This email originated outside our organization.

I oppose the zoning application for 695 Grand/Dixies.

Priscilla Brewster
10 Crocus Place
St. Paul, MN 55102
prisbrewster@aol.com

From: [Pereira, Luis \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary](#)
Subject: FW: Development on Grand Avenue
Date: Thursday, June 24, 2021 11:58:32 AM

-----Original Message-----

From: Butler, Sonja (CI-StPaul) <sonja.butler@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Sent: Thursday, June 24, 2021 11:53 AM
To: Siegworth, Emma (CI-StPaul) <Emma.Siegworth@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Cc: Pereira, Luis (CI-StPaul) <Luis.Pereira@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: FW: Development on Grand Avenue

-----Original Message-----

From: Roddie Turner <roddieturner@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 24, 2021 11:50 AM
To: Butler, Sonja (CI-StPaul) <sonja.butler@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Development on Grand Avenue

Think Before You Click: This email originated outside our organization.

I oppose the zoning application for 695 Grand Avenue / Dixie's.

Sincerely,
Rodden Turner

Sent from my iPad

From: [Scott Willman](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul_PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary](#)
Subject: Dixie's Development on Grand Avenue
Date: Thursday, June 24, 2021 3:30:41 PM

I would like to share my perspective on the proposed 695 Grand development. As a neighbor (601 Goodrich) I walk by the site frequently and cannot imagine such a large building with no setback in that space. Why does the city have rules about building height and setbacks if they don't enforce them? It seems that every time a developer proposes a project they request a variance to eliminate the guidelines the city put in place. Approving this project would benefit the building owner and the developer, but certainly not the neighbors near the site or in surrounding areas that use Grand Ave. I suggest we stand firm and require the developer to follow the rules that are in place. A smaller building with more space around the neighbors would seem to make a lot of sense. Thank you for supporting St Paul residents.

Scott

Sent from my iPad

St Albans Grotto Grand Summit Block Club

To: Ari Parritz, representative for ESG, Reuter Walton
Cc/: Summit Hill Association, Rebecca Noecker, Planning Commission
VIA EMAIL

RE: Dixies/ 695 Grand Proposal

June 8, 2021

We are writing to express our objection to the Dixies/695 application and the complete disregard shown by the development team for feedback from the neighborhood. We, and many others, have repeatedly expressed concern regarding the scale of the project, and the developers have returned with an **even taller building**. They **increased the ceiling heights on the main floor and for the penthouse**, so now the building height is 59'-10" instead of 56'-8" to the top of the fifth floor roof. The first floor does not adjust for the hill, so the height at the corner of Grand and St Albans the building will be 3'-6" higher, rising 64'-4" from the sidewalk, and **more than double the height limit** of the current B2 zoning. This creates 64 high x 120 wide vertical wall just 3 feet from the sidewalk on a narrow residential side street. We would welcome a mixed use development that would enhance Grand Avenue and Summit Hill, but this **proposal will severely alter the essential character, damage livability and vitality, harm property values, and negatively impact the locally designated historic district (located across the alley)**. Moreover, there are no practical difficulties preventing compliance with the zoning code. There are no unique circumstances or hardships caused by this large, evenly sloped parcel. This proposal is clearly and grossly **out of scale for the size of the lot and its location**. The developer could build a mixed use project by right without rezoning. Profits alone drive the application.

We want "Missing Middle"

We are not against multifamily – we *are* multifamily housing. We are not against density – we *live in* density. The dominant housing type of our block is "Missing Middle." We are a group of neighbors who have met and had many discussions about this proposal. We represent our "Block Club" –households with frontage on the one-way stretch of St Albans (both sides) as well as on the "shared alley" block bounded by Grotto-St Albans-Summit-Grand. It's a "one and a half block" sized block club. Our block club has had input from homeowner, renter, multi-generational, and co-housing households. Our block club includes varied household types: traditional 2-story and 3-story multifamily flats, a modern 4-unit multifamily with an elevator, converted Victorian multifamily, modern townhouse and historic rowhouse, carriage house

(with windows right on the alley), single family, duplex.

Other than minor concessions related to traffic on the alley, the developer has dismissed, and even amplified, areas of concern. Expressed concerns and criticism of this proposal have centered on four areas: building bulk and form, negative impacts on the neighborhood, lack of compliance with existing zoning rules and regulations, and market concerns. **We oppose a large project of luxury rental that will create development pressure and lead to the loss of Summit Hill's Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH).**

Among those, the underlying, most repeated concern has been and continues to be the building size and form. And, it bears emphasizing that **the too-large scale** (extra tall height combined with near complete lot coverage) **creates or contributes to all the other problems.**

If there can be one overarching recommendation it is this: **the project should be scaled to match the neighborhood**, within the zoning requirements including the East Grand Avenue Overlay district requirements—which is the best and only tool we have to keep *Missing Middle* scale and density and affordability. The existing zoning rules support the essential character of our neighborhood

We ask SHA and Commissioners to vote to deny the extreme level of zoning gymnastics to get around all the rules, and oppose "spot zoning" to "rezone out" of the EGAO.

Biggest shared concern: "Super Size" Scale of Project

BUILDING BULK AND SITE PLANNING

- too tall/ too big / out of scale
- too dense
- too close to alley
- height in wrong places / maximum shadows
- anti-social / double loaded corridor / fishbowl

NEGATIVE IMPACTS ON NEIGHBORHOOD

- traffic, parking and safety; no site lines for parking exits
- loss of neighborhood character/ historic value / property values
- construction impacts, physical damage to neighboring structures

EXISTING LAWS / ZONING CODE

- Support design that would conform to zoning (no variances, including all T2 design standards & footnotes)
- Support keeping B2 or T2 as appropriate rezoning; Oppose T3
- Support East Grand Ave Overlay height limits & design standards; Oppose CUP; oppose variances; oppose spot zoning

MARKET CONCERNS

- Too high rents / Unaffordable housing / too much "luxury" / displacement of NOAH / Condo vs rental/ Short Term Rental/ high vacancy rate of luxury rental /

Thank you for time and consideration,

SAGGS Block Club

From: [Pereira, Luis \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary](#)
Subject: FW:
Date: Thursday, June 24, 2021 11:57:54 AM

From: Butler, Sonja (CI-StPaul) <sonja.butler@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Sent: Thursday, June 24, 2021 11:39 AM
To: Siegworth, Emma (CI-StPaul) <Emma.Siegworth@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Cc: Pereira, Luis (CI-StPaul) <Luis.Pereira@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: FW:

From: Susan St John <privateartmn@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 24, 2021 11:28 AM
To: Butler, Sonja (CI-StPaul) <sonja.butler@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject:

Think Before You Click: This email originated **outside** our organization.

I oppose the zoning application re 695 Development Grand Ave/ Dixies
Susan St john

--

Private Art | Susan St. John
25 St. Albans St. South
Saint Paul, MN 55105
T: 651-227-1449
M: 651-491-4431
privateartmn@gmail.com

From: [Pereira, Luis \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul_PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary](#)
Subject: FW: 695 Grand Avenue Development Proposal
Date: Wednesday, June 23, 2021 8:54:10 AM

From: tess <tereszi.junge@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 22, 2021 11:09 PM
To: Pereira, Luis (CI-StPaul) <Luis.Pereira@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: 695 Grand Avenue Development Proposal

Think Before You Click: This email originated **outside** our organization.

I am opposed to the development of the Dixie's/Emmetts/Saji Ya location as proposed.

I want to:

- **Strengthen and add to existing density and housing options at a compatible scale**
 - Add housing density to grow and revitalize Grand Avenue
- **Strengthen and add to economic diversity of housing options Summit Hill**
 - Support a mix of multifamily housing choices
- **Strengthen and add to economic vitality of Grand Ave, Summit Hill and Saint Paul**
 - Support small businesses

I oppose:

- **New construction that fails to transition to existing areas of the neighborhood**
 - Oversize structures that do not follow existing zoning codes undermine value of existing residences
- **New development that will alter the essential character of the neighborhood**
 - Bringing in a building design better suited for suburban areas detracts from the unique character of the neighborhood

- **Establishing a precedent that leads to further projects that degrades the area's charm**
 - Developments need to complement the eclectic nature of the area

The plans fail to protect the character of the Summit Hill neighborhood.

Please vote against the Dixie's/695 Project's requests to be given exceptions from existing zoning codes.

I want balanced development that respects the historic nature and character of the neighborhood.

Thank you.

Tess Junge
1157 Hague Avenue, St. Paul

An Open Letter to the Summit Hill Association Board –
May 18, 2021

In the April Zoom meeting about the 695 Grand Avenue development, the SHA Zoning Chair cited the Blair House at Selby and Western Avenue as a terrific example of what the 695 Grand Avenue project could become. I agree with that statement. The Blair House at Selby and Western provides an example of economic costs and impact on a community of a development similar to the excesses proposed for 695 Grand Avenue.

This note repeats and expands upon my comments in the April Zoom meeting.

The full Blair House story supports the community opposition to the 695 Grand proposal. 695 Grand replicates Blair House's overbuilding with four floors of apartments over commercial space from lot line to lot line with limited parking. The fundamental character of both buildings is similar.

The Blair House, from its construction in 1888 through the entire 20th century, bankrupted multiple investors & owners. Even after millions of dollars of direct investment by the City of St. Paul in the 1980's, Blair House generated massive dollar losses for developers, and the first twenty years of condo purchasers. Like 695 Grand, the Blair House did not fit in its neighborhood and did not work as promoted. Blair House, a monument to poor initial decisions on a large scale has proved very costly for the community, users and for 100 + years of investors.

Some Blair House Facts

- 1888- Blair House constructed in 1888 for \$150,000 with four floors of rental apartments and one floor of commercial space.
- 1900 Blair House bankrupts its owner and is sold for much less than construction cost.
- 1900-1940's – Succession of owners each resell at a loss. Building abandoned.
- 1970's - With condo conversions sales booming in the Historic Hill District a wealthy neighborhood entrepreneur purchases the Blair House for \$150,000. The Blair House finally sells for its 1880's construction price.
- 1970's - After investing an additional \$150,000 and more to stabilize structure and building systems the local entrepreneur takes a loss & sells the Blair House for \$150,000.
- 1980's –A succession of new developers, after years of struggle convinces the City of St. Paul to "Save the Blair House". The City of St. Paul makes a multi-million dollar public investment to purchase the rest of the block west of Blair House,, closes Arundel Street and purchases the first four lots of the next block. The acquired land is converted to a 100+ car surface parking lot, underground parking and a public/private development of new apartment building with first floor commercial tied to Blair House commercial space to enable make the Blair House to become a success. This does not happen.
- 1990's – Blair House condo units sell slowly. Resales often require sellers to accept a loss. Commercial spaces have difficulty maintaining occupancy rates after initial retail tenants leave. Multiple tenants come and go.

- 2000's During the first or second decade of the 21st Century some Condo units sell at prices equal to or greater than purchase price.
- 2021.- Blair House, after 123 years of creating economic hardship and bankruptcies for multiple investors over 100+ years finally provides some economic stability for condo investors.
- Commercial rental spaces remain largely empty with high turnover.
- Surface parking is now controlled by a gate. This publicly created parking is no longer shared with the rest of Selby-Western district, including the closed section of Arundel and former right-of way.

Blair House provides a cautionary example for those seeking to repeat this type of folly. The development at 695 Grand Avenue will not be as lucky.

If built as proposed it will degrade the community with issues similar to those the Blair House has imposed on the Ramsey Hill neighborhood. At Blair House, the losses to the investors were economic - private and public dollars. The cost to the community of alternating decades of limited use, bankruptcy & then vacant building cannot be easily measured. The Blair House did help keep neighbor's property taxes lower but only because for over 100 years it continued to depress the value of nearby homes and commercial properties.

Similar experiences in Summit Hill could be our fate if the 695 program goes forward as proposed.

Ted Lentz, AIA
 SHA Board Member 1975-1979
 692 Summit Avenue Home Owner 1973-2019

To: Alan Torstenson, Allan <allan.torstenson@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
From Ted Lentz, AIA, - ted@tedlantz.com

Mr. Torstenson:

My neighbor Dr. Marilyn Bach shared your June 10 email on the 695 Grand Avenue rezoning application for 695 Grand Avenue-The Dixies Restaurant site and asked me to comment.

You noted: *The Dixie's site, 695 Grand Avenue, owner and development team are requesting the following:*

1. *Rezone from B2 Community Business District and EG East Grand Avenue Overlay District to T3 Traditional Neighborhood District without the EG overlay district.*
2. *Conditional use permit for a 59' 10" building height.*
3. *Variance for front setback from Grand Avenue (10' maximum, 18' proposed for the middle section of the building).*

The requested rezoning, conditional use permit, and variance are just for the 695 Grand site itself, at the NW corner of Grand and St. Albans.

In a week or a month, when the COVID 19 Public Meeting Restrictions are lifted and the District 16 community can finally meet in open public forum, the community will support denying these zoning requests.

The following pages address the failures of the T3 Zoning request to meet the City of St. Paul Standards under the Zoning Codes.

I am developing a statement of why T3 Zoning is inappropriate and should be denied that will be sent later today if possible.

The following presented to identify probable additional **variances** and **Conditional Use Permits** (CUPS) apparent today.

(1) Dimensional Design Standard Table 66.331

- Footnote (e) 66.331 has two provisions, an alley height limit and a shadow setback requirement, that are not being met:
 - Alley height limit: "Structures shall be no more than twenty-five (25) feet high along side and rear property lines abutting RL-RT2 residential districts; structures may exceed this twenty-five (25) foot height limit if stepped back from side and rear property lines a distance equal to the additional height and setback is prescribed and it is not met" — does this require a variance?
 - Shadow Setback: "height of structures may exceed the maximum if set back from side and rear setback lines a distance equal to additional height. --does this require a variance?"

Diagrams by ESG [pages 5-9 below] show the alley height limit and setback is not met. Additionally, on the St Albans side, there will be a building height of 64'-4" from actual grade, and 59'-10" from average grade. The flat height is above the 55 foot limit, and the 3'-0" setback is in violation of shadow step back from (e). Please note the St Albans diagram by ESG does not show the shadow step back, but at least 4'-10" would be required (if following the avg height) or 9'-4", if following the actual height from grade of 64'-4".

Doesn't the applicant have to get a variance from the Dimensional Design Standard Table 66.331 ?

(2) Traditional Neighborhood Design Standards 66.343

Traditional Neighborhood design standards are specific rules that apply to a project "unless the applicant can demonstrate that there are circumstances unique to the property that make compliance impractical or unreasonable." (66.343)

- DS #2 *Transitions to Lower Density* — "Transitions in density or intensity shall be managed through careful attention to building height, scale, massing and solar exposure."
 - This project is sited such that the tallest highest are all along the residential neighbors, and having a U-shaped design with a northern "bottom" of the U located just 8 feet from the property line is particularly noteworthy as the opposite of "careful attention" to solar exposure. The shallow 10 step backs at the 4th level does little to lessen the impacts of this 60 foot x 230 wall.
 - **Does this require a variance?**
- DS #5 *Use established building facade line* — "For corner buildings, each facade that fronts a public street shall maintain the established building facade line."
 - There are two historic structures to the South on the same block face at this proposal. More than 50% of the block is built up. The established facade of the historic Clarence Johnston rowhouses is setback 15 feet, and for the Hermann Kretz brownstones it is 18 feet. These were field measured to the face the building, and do not include porches and bays of course. The Developer has proposed just 3 feet as a setback on narrow, residential St Albans, and this 3-0 setback extends for 115 feet – essentially the entire length at grade except for 12 x 15 electrical equipment area (will be fenced in by code). The claimed step back of the upper levels is filled with terraces. There is 99 feet of wall that rises the full height of 64+ feet from the sidewalk
 - **Does this require a variance?**

There are other design standards that do not seem to be met –

- open space requirements;
- residential garage location and
- residential garage setback of 10 feet
 - (do the pedestrians on St Albans not deserve to be seen by exiting vehicles? 3 feet is not enough site line for pedestrian safety);,
- building height treatment of one-story buildings, etc,--

Of the 22 specific requirements for T2 (plus one additional for this proposed T3 micro district), the ones listed above are the most egregious. Doesn't the applicant have to get a variance from the design standards? "impractical and unreasonable" sounds very similar to the "practical difficulty" standard of variance requests.

(3) Conditional Use Permit

Third, won't this application require modification from the Conditional Use Permit required conditions as well? Standard CUP conditions 61.500 are not met. I include them here for references purposes, with emphasis added.

- The extent, location and intensity of the use will be in substantial compliance with the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan and any applicable subarea plans which were approved by the city council.
- The use will provide adequate ingress and egress to minimize traffic congestion in the public streets.
- The use will not be detrimental to the existing character of the development in the immediate neighborhood or endanger the public health, safety and general welfare.

- The use will not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of the surrounding property for uses permitted in the district.
- The use shall, in all other respects, conform to the applicable regulations of the district in which it is located

As already shown, the project does not meet required conditions and required design standards so it does not “in all other respects” meet the zoning code. This is a modification. It does not meet the East Grand Avenue Overlay, as it tries to rezone itself out. This project will also be detrimental to the “existing character” of the immediate neighborhood by severely limiting access to sunlight. The primary ingress and egress is located on a narrow residential side street with only 3 feet of buffer from a heavily used pedestrian sidewalk in neighborhood with young children will endanger public safety. It will impede the normal and orderly development of neighborhoods though lowered property values and the reduced enjoyment of neighboring residential properties.

Modification of Conditional Use Permit conditions require “exceptional undue hardship of the landowner” and must be “consistent with the reasonable enjoyment of adjacent property” 61.502

The height exception Conditional Use Permit footnote specifically mentions shadow studies, and the 230 wide x 60 tall wall along the North end of the property bears further mention. The long uninterrupted width will cast an all-day shadow for the 6 months of year—from fall equinox Sept 21 through the solstice to the Spring equinox Mar 21— on neighboring properties. The tall height makes that shadow extend to fully cover the entire depth of the lot across of the alley. The difference between a current code compliant structure and this proposal is quite literally the difference between half a year in shadow and not. This will prevent solar installations on neighbors' garages, and the "reasonable enjoyment" of light and air for the rowhouses to the North, and the multifamily residences to the East and west. The shadow study provided by the developer is inadequate as it does not include the required alley setbacks from footnote (e).

- T3 has a height limit of 55 feet for mixed use, footnote (g) 66.331 allows an increase in height “... a maximum height of ninety (90) feet may be permitted with a conditional use permit. Structures shall be stepped back one (1) foot from all setback lines for every two and one-half (2½) feet of height over seventy-five (75) feet. A shadow study may be required for a conditional use permit application to help determine the impact of the additional height
- The Conditional Use Permit does not exempt the project from footnote (e) or (g) — "The use shall, in all other respects, conform to the applicable regulations of the district in which it is located."

What exceptional circumstances modify the requirements for a Conditional Use Permit ?

(4) Loading requirements

The property currently has a non-conforming condition of commercial vehicle loading from the residential alley. This creates hazardous conditions, particularly in winter, and the alley is blocked on a daily basis preventing the collection of garbage and recycling, as well as the orderly ingress and egress to neighbors' garages. Rather than correcting this non-conformance, as is required for a new development, the applicant had initially proposed to retain loading from the alley right-of-way. The applicant, has revised this to load from Grand Avenue, which while an improvement, is a circumstance that does not meet zoning code requirements. Loading requirements for new construction are stipulated in 63.400

All spaces shall be laid out in dimensions of at least ten (10) by fifty (50) feet or five hundred (500) square feet in area, with a clearance of at least fourteen (14) feet in height. Loading dock approaches shall be provided with a pavement having a permanent, durable and dustless surface.

(a) All spaces shall be provided in at least the following ratio:

Gross Floor Area (In Square Feet)	Loading and Unloading Space Required in Terms of Square Feet of Gross Floor Area
0—1,400	None
1,401—20,000	One space
20,001—100,000	One space plus one space for each 20,000 square feet in excess of 20,001 square feet
100,001 and over	Five (5) spaces

(b) No off-street loading space shall be located in any yard adjoining any residential use or zoning district.

(c) Space shall be provided within the off-street loading area so that any maneuvering back into or out of a loading space can be conducted outside of any public right-of-way.

The developer's proposal does not meet this requirement.

Does this exception require a variance from loading requirements?

Finally, I would like to add some commentary to my questions for context.

The T2 standards apply to this parcel, per the East Grand Avenue Overlay. The proposed land use of a mixed use structure is allowed in B2. Therefore the rezoning, and (modified) Conditional Use Permit appear to be sleights of hand to obscure increases in building bulk, mass, and height without seeking multiple City of St. Paul Zoning variances. Amazingly, even after trying to pretend this small parcel meets guidelines for a high density transit zone the developers requested additional more variances while this reviews indicates the are probably even more will be required. Codes and guidelines have been crafted in open public forums to protect the community and the City of St. Paul. The breadth of change to the rules of this parcel should weigh heavily on the zoning department, especially considering the following Comp Plan Land use policies

- **Policy LU-29.** Ensure that building massing, height, scale and design transition to those permitted in adjoining districts
- **Policy LU-17.** Promote access to sunlight for solar energy systems while accounting for the development rights of adjacent properties
- **Policy LU-20.** Encourage private landowners to provide public access to privately-owned open spaces, and facilitate joint use of athletic fields and school playgrounds
 - Related to LU-20, all the “open” space —what little there is — is privately owned and controlled. The restaurant space will be fenced, by city code for alcohol service, and the second level rooftop faux courtyard will be private and is not a “required yard”. The developer is even taking over the ROW, by placing bike parking and benches in the boulevard area, where they can be covered in snowplow mounds each winter.

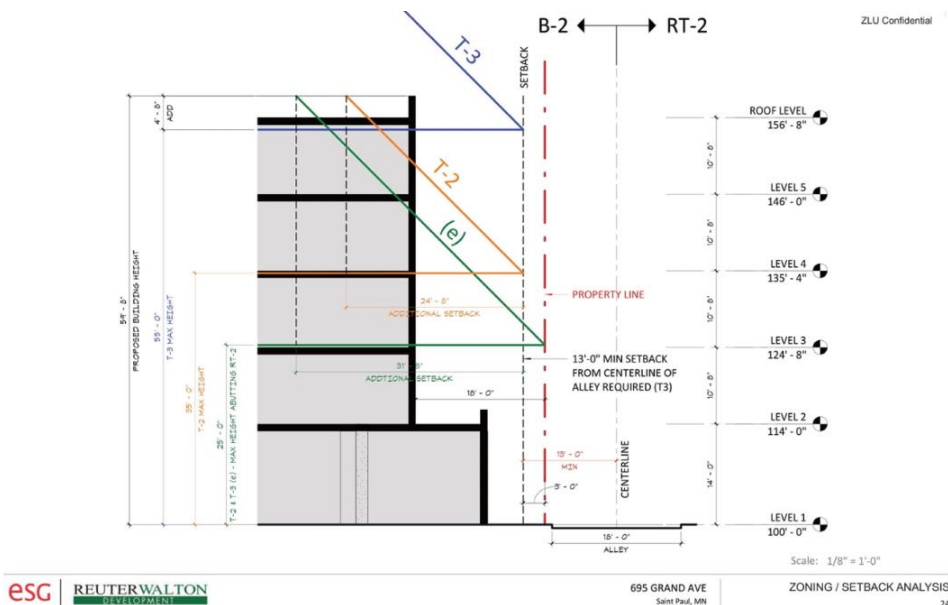
- **Policy LU-34.** Provide for medium-density housing that diversifies housing options, such as townhouses, courtyard apartments and smaller multi-family developments, compatible with the general scale of Urban Neighborhoods
 - It is also noteworthy that these extreme revisions to existing zoning regulations are being requested to build new “market rate” housing that will have rents more than double the median rent in Summit Hill, which according to are \$906- \$920 per month range. While this project will not directly displace any housing, it will set a precedent that will create tremendous development pressure and lead to the loss (demolition) of the naturally occurring affordable housing on and around Grand Avenue. This project, if it receives all its elaborate adaptations to the zoning code, will make Summit Hill less economically diverse
- **Policy LU-36.** Promote neighborhood-serving commercial businesses within Urban Neighborhoods that are compatible with the character and scale of the existing residential development
- **Policy H-16.** Increase housing choice across the city to support economically diverse neighborhoods by pursuing policies and practices that maximize housing and locational choices for residents of all income levels

Thank you for your attention to these issues.

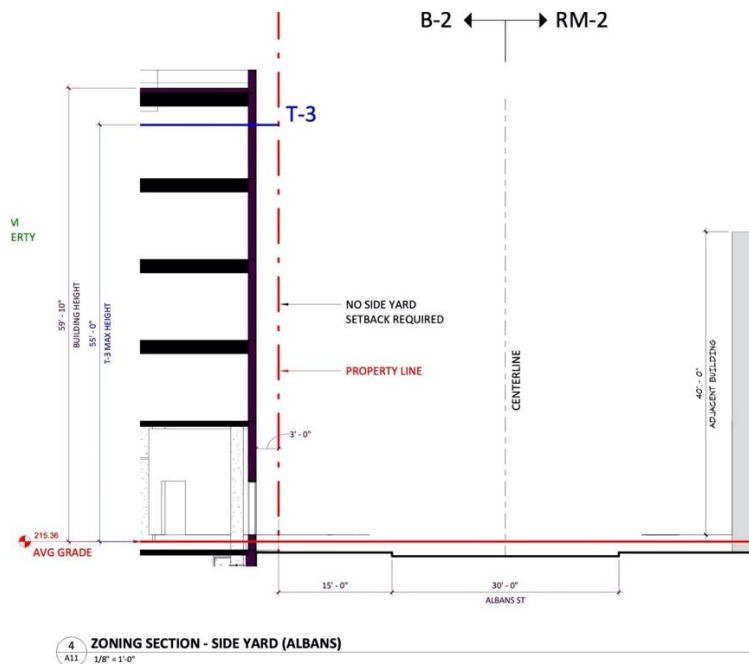
I believe very soon, when the District 16 community can finally meet in open public forum after COVID 19 Public Meeting Restrictions are lifted, the community will finally be able to fully consider these zoning requests.

Sincerely,
 Ted Lentz. AIA
 692 Summit Saint Paul, MN 55105

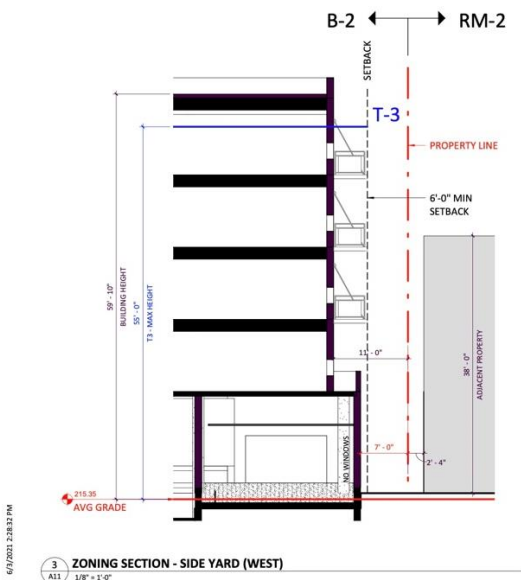
Attached are reduced copies of developer documents. These are referenced in the body of this text. If you do not have the original full size 8.5 x 11 inch copies please contact me and I will forward those to you.



Height diagram at St Albans, note does not show current B2 limits, T2 limits, or EG limits, or “stepback” diagonal for T3



Height diagram at St Albans, note does not show current B2 limits, T2 limits, or EG limits, or “stepback” diagonal for T3



Left] 6/3/21 Height diagram at West Interior Property line, note does not show current B2 limits, T2 limits, or EG limits, or “stepback” diagonal for T3.

Errors and Omissions: The height diagram shows an inaccurate height for the neighboring 2-story apartment building at 707 Grand. Field measures with professional tools indicate that this height is only 25 feet.

The Developer was notified on this error in their March diagram, which gave the height as 37 feet. In response, they increased the error by one foot. [right] Altered Elevation [original by ESG dated 6/3/21] –707 Grand has been added with the correct 25 foot height



Grand Ave Elevation (6/3/21) showing height 64'-4" at St Albans. Ceiling height were arbitrarily increased since the March documents. There is no "practical difficulty" that requires 9'-0", 10'-0" and 15'-0" interior ceiling heights.

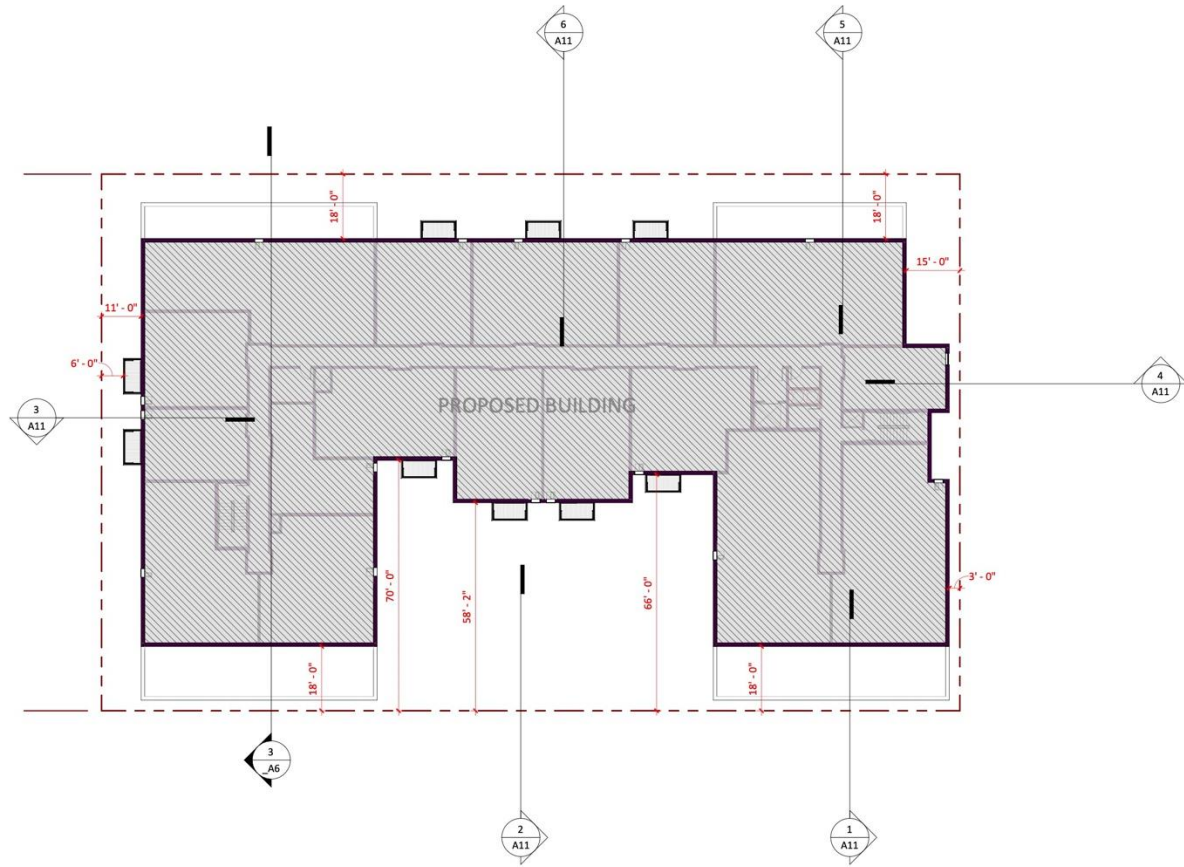


Main floor plan (6/3/21) showing near total lot coverage at grade and the complete lack of open space. The restaurant patio along Grand is private space that will be fen-ced by city ordinance (due to alcohol service) Errors and Omissions: The 12 x 16 notch is for electrical equipment and requires a concrete pad (not shown) and a fence (not shown). Narrow 3'-0" setbacks are unlikely to be landscaped green space as shown in the plan, given the exceptionally small setback. The height labels are inaccurate for the neighboring buildings: the 2-story apartment building at 707 Grand is labeled as 2.5; the 2.5 story rowhouses at 27 St Albans are labelled at 3.5 and the two 3-story condominiums are labelled at 3.5 stories. Half stories are created by sloped roof plans at the attic level; garden level are not stories. Setbacks of neighboring buildings are inaccurate. The condominiums at 30 St Albans is not located on the sidewalk,; further, it has porches that extend to the sidewalk with a 12'-0" setback for the entry and the main building façade. The condominiums at 42 St

Room Schedule:

Room	Area (SF)
2 BED	1,348 SF
1 BED + DEN	991 SF
1 BED	838 SF
2 BED	1,338 SF
1 BED	838 SF
1 BED + DEN	991 SF
2 BED	1,342 SF
1 BED	838 SF
1 BED + DEN	997 SF
1 BED	832 SF
1 BED	832 SF
1 BED + DEN	996 SF
1 BED + DEN	1,711 SF
2 BED + DEN	1,384 SF
1 BED + DEN	986 SF
1 BED	841 SF
1 BED	1,311 SF
2 BED	1,312 SF
ALCOVE	639 SF
ALCOVE	675 SF
ALCOVE	553 SF
CIRCULATION	2,585 SF

This entire floor is not allowed by current zoning



3 LEVEL 5 - SETBACKS
A10 3/64" = 1'-0"

5th floor plan (6/3/21) showing large lot coverage and that most building edges are located closest to residential neighbors, maximizing shadow walls. Errors and omissions: terraces located along St Albans are shown less prominently than balconies, even though the design of these terraces will contribute significantly to negative shadows effects.

This entire floor is not allowed by current zoning.

Siegworth, Emma (CI-StPaul)

From: Torstenson, Allan (CI-StPaul)
Sent: Friday, June 18, 2021 4:27 PM
To: Siegworth, Emma (CI-StPaul); Pereira, Luis (CI-StPaul); Anderson, Tia (CI-StPaul); Diatta, YaYa (CI-StPaul); Dadlez, Kady (CI-StPaul)
Cc: Warner, Peter (CI-StPaul)
Subject: FW: "T3 or Not T3 that is the Question" - Hamlet

Here is another email From Ted Lentz last night.

There are currently 11 separate zoning districts along Grand Avenue on the block between St. Albans and Grotto. Most consist of a single lot and most are smaller than the 695 Grand site. 695 Grand, currently zoned B2, does not adjoin another lot with B2 zoning.

The following email leaves out language in § 66.314, *T3 district intent*, that the T3 district is also intended for smaller sites in an existing mixed-use neighborhood center where there already are interconnected streets, a mix of housing types and sizes, and a mix of residential and commercial uses in close proximity.

From: Ted Lentz <ted@tedlantz.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 17, 2021 6:40 PM
To: Torstenson, Allan (CI-StPaul) <allan.torstenson@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Cc: Marilyn Bach <bachx001@umn.edu>
Subject: "T3 or Not T3 that is the Question" - Hamlet

T3 or Not T3 that is the question

Mr. Torstenson:

My neighbor Dr. Marilyn Bach shared your June 10 email on the 695 Grand Avenue rezoning application for 695 Grand Avenue-The Dixies Restaurant site and asked me to comment.

You noted: *The Dixie's site, 695 Grand Avenue, owner and development team are requesting the following:*

1. *Rezone from B2 Community Business District and EG East Grand Avenue Overlay District to T3 Traditional Neighborhood District without the EG overlay district.*

That first request should be granted-

The City must reject rezoning to T3 - Traditional Neighborhood District without the East Grand Avenue overlay district.

1. The District 16 Planning Council - Summit Hill has historically opposed spot zoning.
2. Creating a zoning "district" that is composed of a single commercial site contradicts the civic purpose of Zoning.
3. T3 zoning category was created for a **district** (not a single site) that "provides for higher-density transit and pedestrian oriented – mixed use development... -large enough to support "A system of open space resources and amenities; and incorporation of environmental features into the design of the neighborhood" This very small, 0.7 acre site lacks the size,. Supportive public transit and community infrastructure to support such an intensive land use

4. T3 Zoning is for “High Density Transit Districts”. Creating this as a 230 x 130 foot T3 District at the corner of St. Albans St. and Grand Avenue misrepresents the nature of this site at this location in St. Paul. For an insight into a actual T3 reality compare 695 Grand Corner to University and Dale:

- a. Grand and St. Albans Corner with 3 auto traffic lanes and a usually half full or less bus running 2 to 4 times an hour to Dale and University an actual T3 District with 8 lanes of auto traffic and the Green Line Light Rail system stops every 15 minutes with 39,000 passengers a day past its door plus supplemental buses.
- b. Unlike 695 Grand at University and Dale, an actual T3 district, the building under construction on University and Dale has major setbacks at the base and stepbacks as it rises very similar to those recommended by the neighbors damaged by 695 Grand request. These two sites, 695 Grand and University & Dale are almost the same size.
- c. Can St. Albans and Summit neighbors receive consideration and protection as robust as those provided by our neighbors in the Frogtown Community. Does Summit Hill deserve less than Frogtown? Is the stable and successful Frogtown community worth more to the City of St. Paul than Summit Avenue, Grand Avenue and the Summit Hill Community?

Thank you for your support and attention.

Ted Lentz
651-468-8946

Even Hamlet knew not to set sail after loading 12 warhorses onto a 6 horse boat. Even a slight storm sinks the ship.

Siegworth, Emma (CI-StPaul)

From: Butler, Sonja (CI-StPaul)
Sent: Wednesday, June 16, 2021 2:59 PM
To: Siegworth, Emma (CI-StPaul)
Subject: FW: 695 Grand Avenue Development Proposal - OPPOSE!

From: Timothy Coleman-Zaitzeff <timothy.zaitzeff@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 16, 2021 2:41 PM
Subject: 695 Grand Avenue Development Proposal - OPPOSE!

Think Before You Click: This email originated outside our organization.

Hello,

I am opposed to the development of the Dixie's/Emmetts/Saji Ya location as proposed.

The 695 development proposal does a disservice to both the small businesses and residents of my community. I oppose new construction that fails to transition to existing areas of the neighborhood. The proposal includes oversize structures that do not follow existing zoning codes and undermine the value of existing residences.

I want to strengthen and add to existing density and housing options at a compatible scale to revitalize Grand Avenue. We need more missing middle housing for residents in need of livable and affordable living spaces, not giant expensive apartment complexes that loom over one of the liveliest areas of St. Paul.

Please vote against the Dixie's/695 Project's requests to be given exceptions from existing zoning codes.

Thank you,

Tim