

From: [qwerty](#)
To: [cedric.baker@gmail.com](#); [tramhoang.sppc@gmail.com](#); [adejoy@esndc.org](#); [kristinemariongrill@gmail.com](#); [nmhood@gmail.com](#); [luiserangelmorales@gmail.com](#); [jake.reilly76@gmail.com](#); [usstmc@gmail.com](#); [Pereira, Luis \(CI-StPaul\)](#); [Butler, Sonja \(CI-StPaul\)](#); [aquanettaa@gmail.com](#); [blindeke@gmail.com](#); [gmcsmurtrey07@gmail.com](#); [k.mouacheupao@gmail.com](#); [aperryman@genesysworks.org](#); [mieeta@gmail.com](#); [Jeff.risberg@gmail.com](#); [wendyLunderwood@gmail.com](#); [zhijun.yang@metrostate.edu](#); [simon.taghioff@gmail.com](#)
Cc: [#CI-StPaul_Ward1](#); [Noecker, Rebecca \(CI-StPaul\)](#); [#CI-StPaul_Ward3](#); [#CI-StPaul_Ward4](#); [#CI-StPaul_Ward5](#); [#CI-StPaul_Ward6](#); [#CI-StPaul_Ward7](#)
Subject: Dixies/695 Grand Public Comment:Opposition to Rezoning. CUP and Variances
Date: Sunday, June 27, 2021 11:48:07 PM
Attachments: [image.png](#)

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

image.png



Dear Planning Commissioner:

Attached please find a link to a YouTube video that I would like to submit as public comment in opposition to the extreme land use intensity increases for Grand/ Dixies in the form of rezoning, CUP, and variances.

An earlier version, based on the March plan set, of this video was submitted as public comment to the Summit Hill Association, on three occasions, but it was not admitted to the public record. An earlier version of the video was also shared with the development team.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=za7YMzu02W8&t=116s>

The current version was modeled at scale to match the plans and elevations that were submitted to the city on June 3, 2021. This model and video are true in scale and proportion to the design being submitted and the buildings in the immediate context. This new model reflects the increase in height that was added to the building as well as the minor adjustments to the configuration of the building mass such as balcony projections. The model was constructed in Trimble Sketchup and geolocated to the site.

This video was made to show what the developers Reuter Walton, and the architects ESG and the landowner Peter Kenifick were trying to hide from being viewed. These developers are proposing a monster. The video shows the full size and scale of this building in context. Notably, images provided by the developer never show the entire building nor do they show it in relation to the neighboring structures. This video shows how much this massively out of

scale pushes right up against the neighboring residences with malice.

At the halfway point, there is an alternative design. This design was presented in the spirit of compromise and has been presented to the developer team. Notably, this compromise design follows the spirit not the letter of the height limit requirement-- it is four stories, not three. To mitigate the added height, it strictly follows the traditional neighborhood design standards: particularly the required step downs and setbacks, solar orientation, and residential transitions. This alternative design (46-54 units) would garner support with the immediate neighbors.

The response I received from the developer was that the alternative design would be economically "unfeasible." Indeed, the only rationale provided against every concern and criticism raised has been economic feasibility. Yet, the developer has never shown any numbers to support this claim. Moreover, economic feasibility and developer profit is not listed as a criteria for rezoning. Economic feasibility and developer profits is not a condition for a conditional use permit. Economic feasibility and developer profits is not one of the required factors for variances.

The design is a worst case scenario of aggressive/ steroidal development that might happen to any site. This project will harm the property values of the neighboring structure. So negative tax values..are to be expected. The saddest part of this is we all want development to happen, but this design is a shot across the bow. They intend to strip the code of any say on what can get built. I thought we lived by rules and laws designed to produce fair and just outcomes. The Summit Hill vote did not reflect the neighborhood sentiment. The SHA board was supposed to represent, as evidenced by the official public comment received (58% opposed), the feedback from the meetings (overwhelmingly critical), or the strong support for the Overlay shown in the recent survey. The changes do not begin to comply with Traditional Neighborhood design standards, and violate the intent and spirit of the EG overlay.

And all for luxury housing? If we throw away all the rules for luxury-priced housing, how can we ever expect developers to provide affordable housing--there is no incentive.

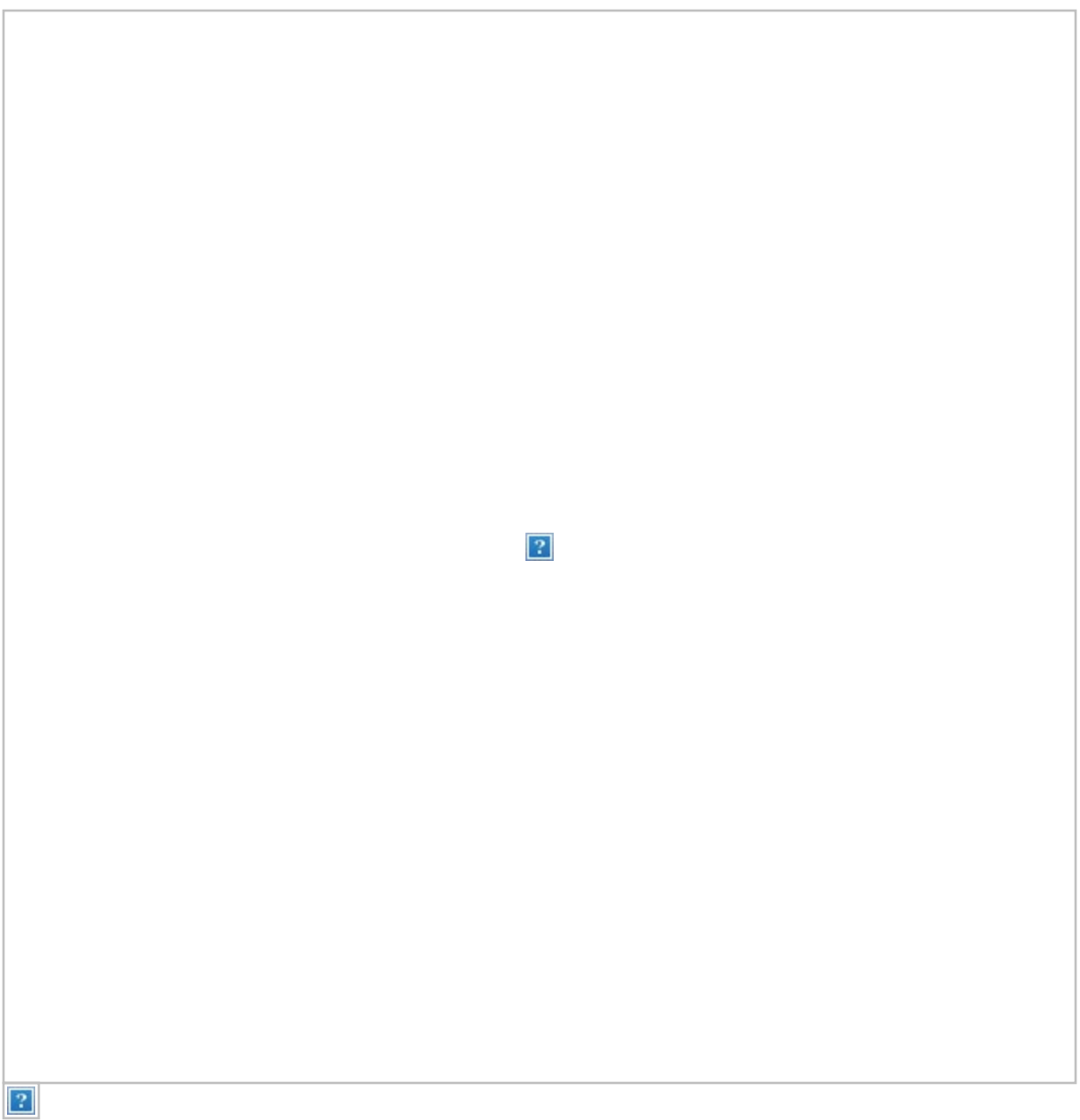
Thank you.

Jon Mason

Resident. St.Albans St. S.

Attachments area

[Preview YouTube video 695 Grand Ave Development](#)



This video is a response to
the proposed development
at Dixies/695 Grand Ave.



The white form is a true
to scale representation of
the proposed building.



The 3d model was built by a professional model maker using the developer's published plans.



The adjacent buildings were measured
and modelled true to scale.

Play (k)



0:22 / 4:39





The building ignores the East Grand
Overlay District zoning requirements.

No effort to transition or blend to residential neighbors.



Building is 1.7x taller
than allowed, but still
has a one-story building
expression on Grand
(which is discouraged by
Traditional
Neighborhood design
standards.).



Building is 1.7x taller than allowed, but still has a one-story building expression on Grand (which is discouraged by Traditional Neighborhood design standards.).



Private space is not public "open space".



Alcohol served = fence.



"Junkspace is like being
condemned to a perpetual
Jacuzzi with millions of your
best friends." -Rem Koolhaas





Dangerous blind exit.



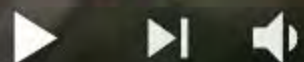
Disregards the St Albans
Street setback.
No meaningful effort to
transition heights.



Largest building bulk is
along the North, closest
to residential neighbors.



Play (k)



1:38 / 4:39



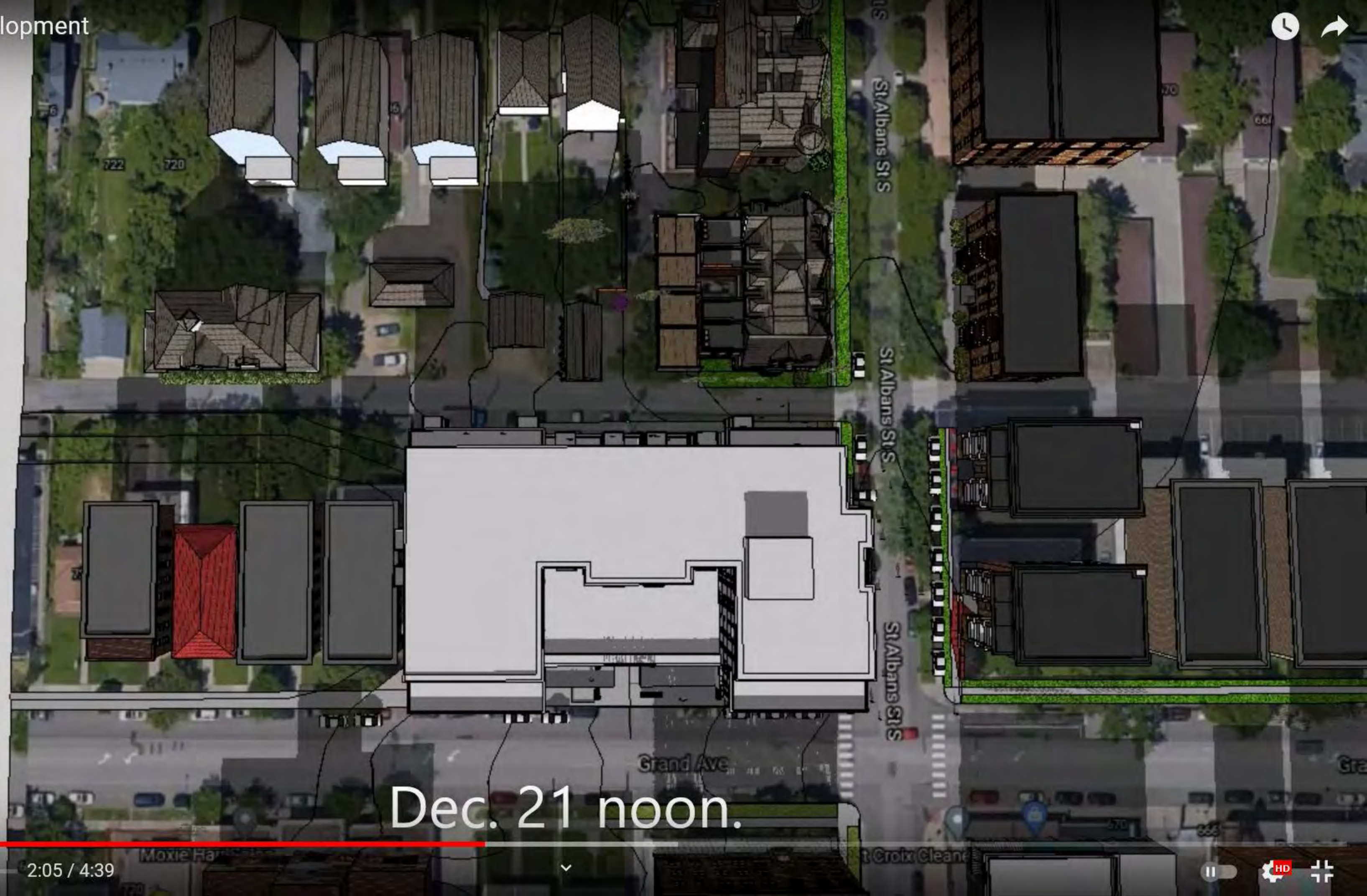


64 ' tall wall x 230' wide,
with balconies projecting beyond the building edge

No meaningful effort to transition heights or provide setbacks to alley.

No sun in winter = ice alley glacier. Hazardous.





Dec. 21 noon.

Play (k)

2:05 / 4:39

HD



The following concept was developed with Missing Middle scale, but
also with the spirit of compromise toward the Dixie's proposal

▶ ▶ 🔊 2:23 / 4:39



HD

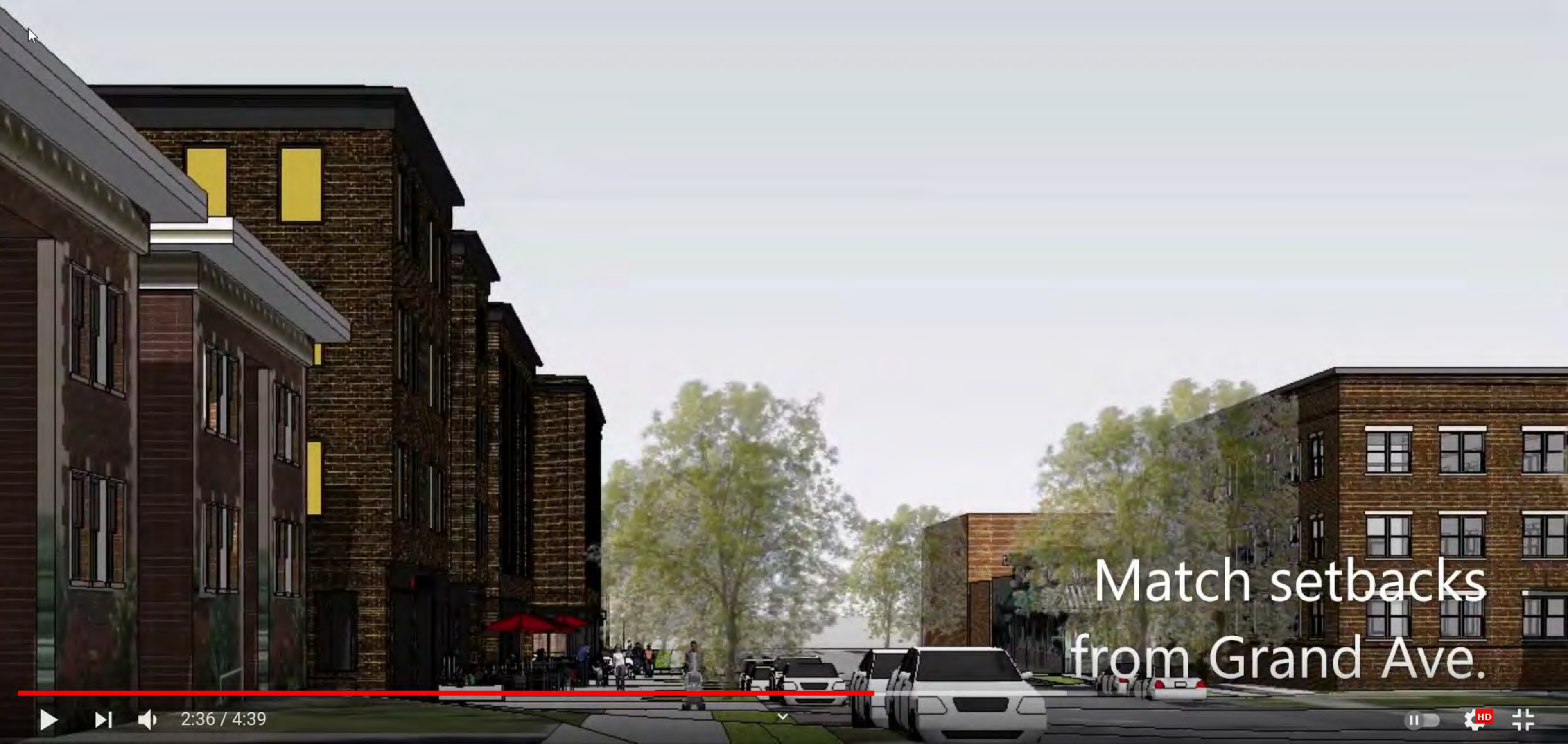




This is an alternative design for 695 Grand Ave.



Match setbacks
from Grand Ave.



Match setbacks
from Grand Ave.

Designed to look like multiple buildings.
Heights step down with the natural hill



The building connects to St. Albans
with complimentary proportions in height and width



Building steps
down and back.





Vehicle exit is set back from sidewalk a full car length for safety.





Residential
Transitions:
12/21 Winter
solstice max
shadows: sunlight
still reaches
neighbor's 1st level
windows at noon.

Higher density at compatible neighborhood scale.
This is Missing Middle.





The placement of the building creates open space with sunlight.

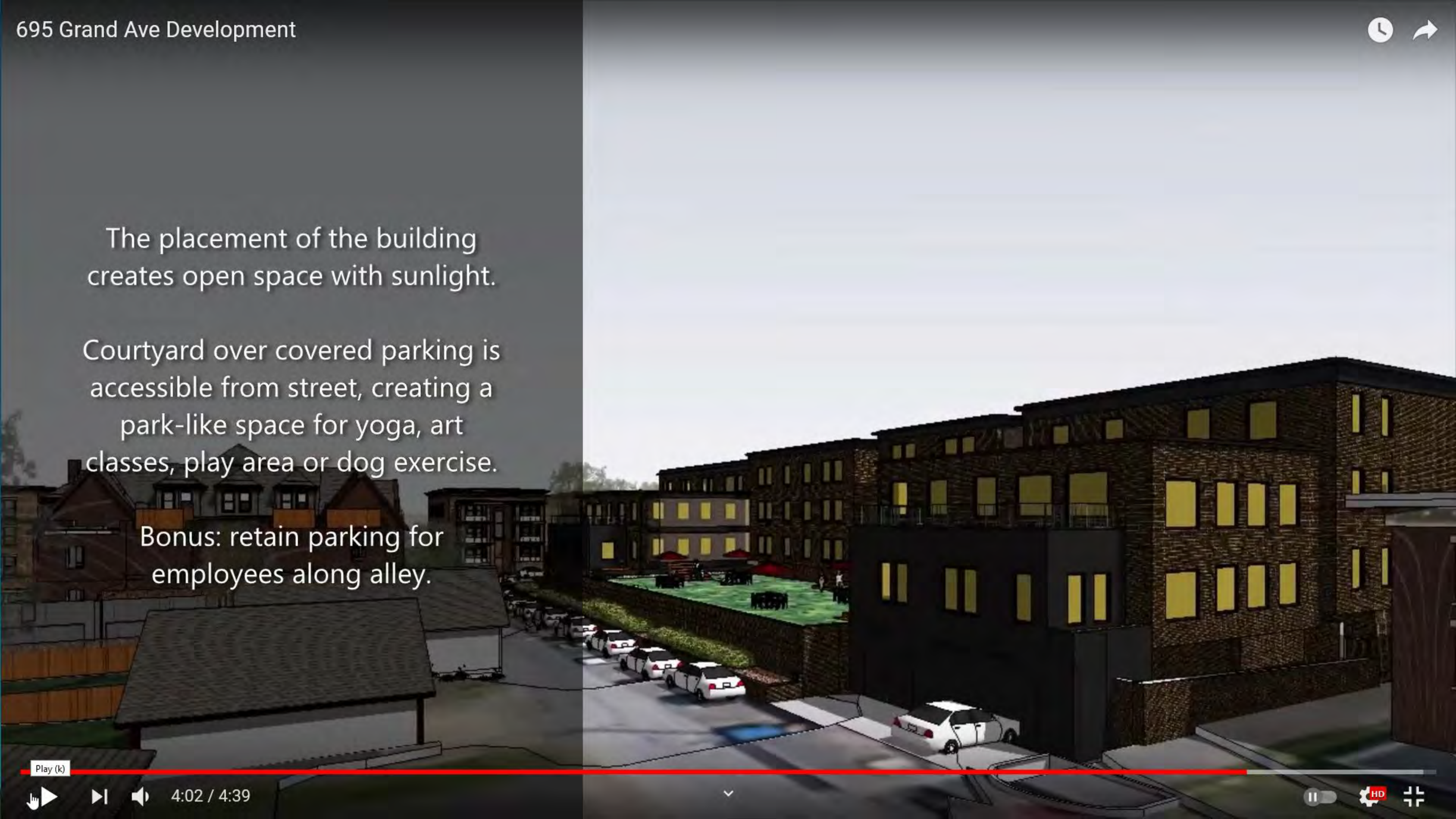
Courtyard over covered parking is accessible from street, creating a park-like space for yoga, art classes, play area or dog exercise.

Bonus: retain parking for employees along alley.

The placement of the building
creates open space with sunlight.

Courtyard over covered parking is
accessible from street, creating a
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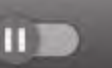


Careful attention to solar impacts through height transitions and building placement mitigate adverse impacts on neighbors





4:24 / 4:39



HD





More housing. Compatible
neighborhood scale.
This is Missing Middle.

Prepared by Friends of A Better Way St Paul

RE: PUBLIC COMMENT IN **OPPOSITION TO ZF#21-269-061 695 Grand CUP and variances**

VIA EMAIL TO PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary@ci.stpaul.mn.us; Contact-Council@ci.stpaul.mn.us

July 14, 2021

Dear Planning Commissioners:

I oppose the 695 Grand rezoning, CUP and variances application for 695 Grand/Dixies. I urge to deny the CUP and all variances for the project due to its inappropriate scale, and the lack of legal basis for variances or a CUP, both of which require unusual circumstances caused by the land.

Additionally, Commissioners should be aware that there are numerous errors and omissions in the submitted planning documents. These errors conveniently show less contrast in building height to the neighboring structures to the proposed Dixies project. Please see the attached Addendum.

I have prepared a video of a scheme of a EG overly complaint building. This video shows that it would be possible and reasonable, as well as beneficial, to develop this parcel as mixed-use buildings with housing over retail at the scale of the neighborhood, with no CUP or variances, and in compliance with the EG overlay and T2 or B2 zoning, with.

Link: <https://youtu.be/0Qo1j5i-sYk>

Sincerely,

Jonathan Mason
21 St. Albans

ADDENDUM

March 2021 Height diagram at West Interior Property line, by ESG

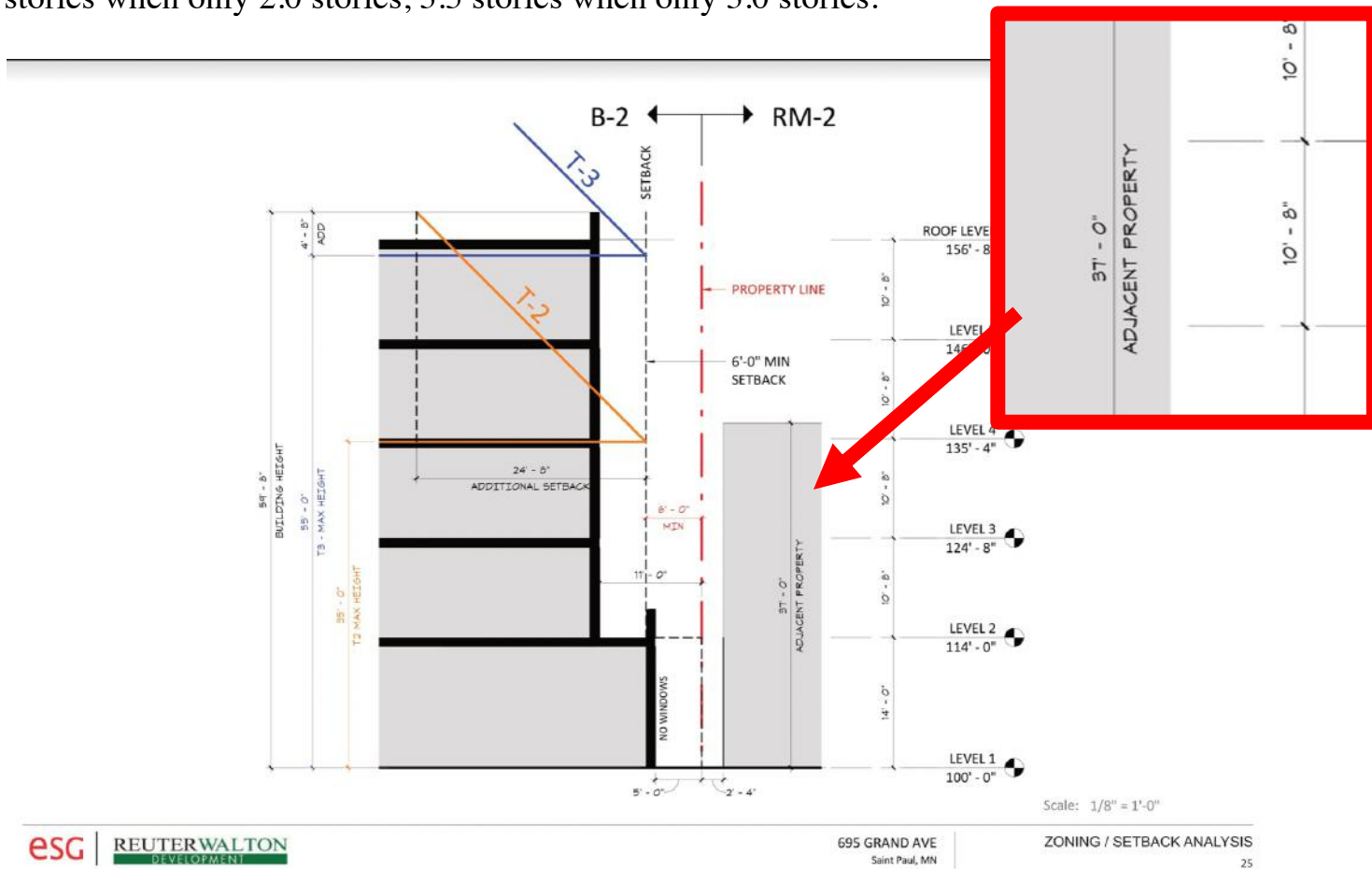
Errors and Omissions:

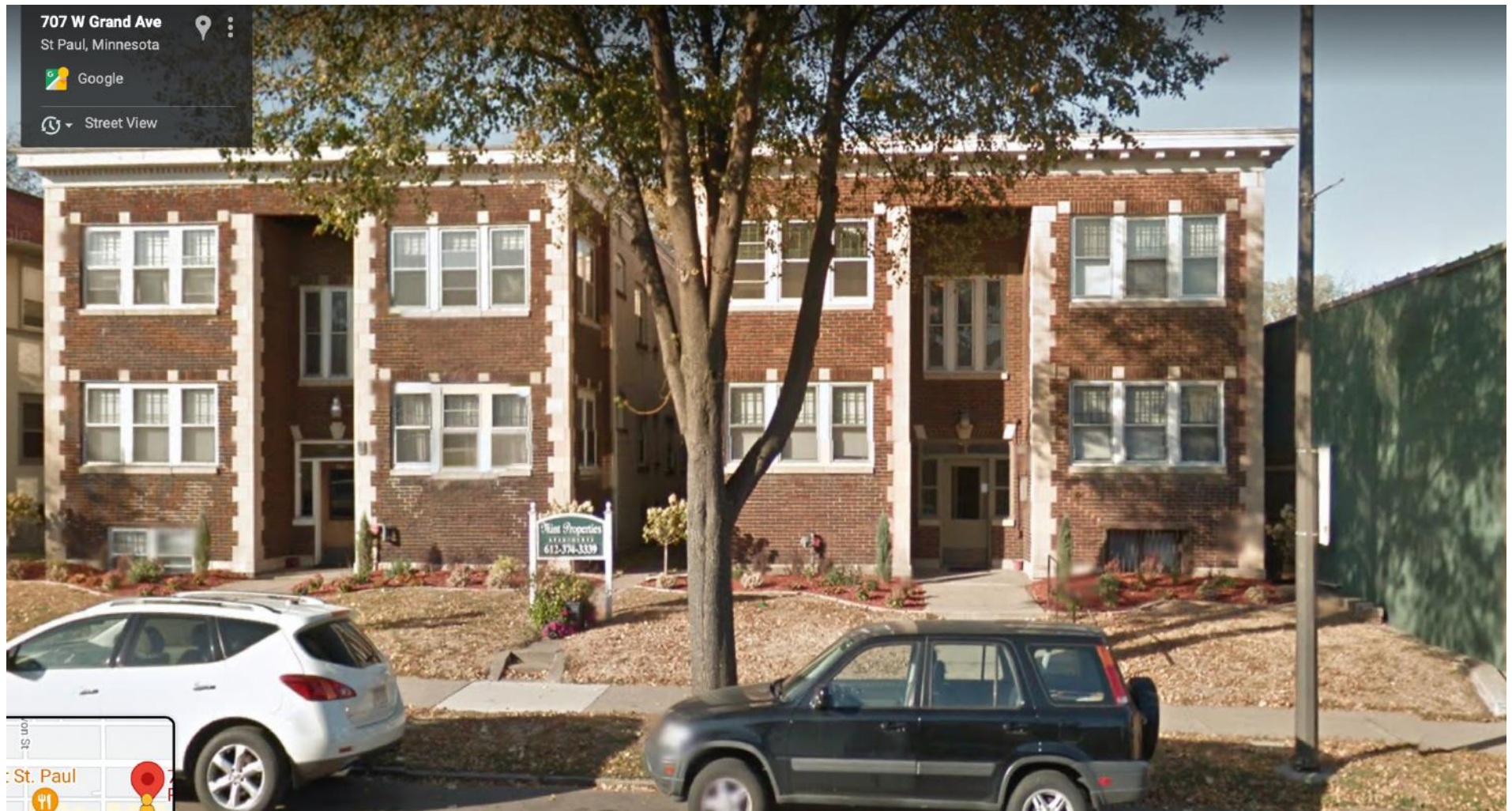
The height diagram shows an **inaccurate height for the neighboring 2-story** apartment building at 707 Grand. **Shown as 37'-0"**

Does not show current B2 limits, T2 limits, or EG limits, or “stepback” diagonal for T3.

Pointed out error to ESG in phone meeting and during public meetings.

Neighboring heights incorrectly represented as 3.5 storied when only 2.5 stories; 2.5 stories when only 2.0 stories, 3.5 stories when only 3.0 stories.



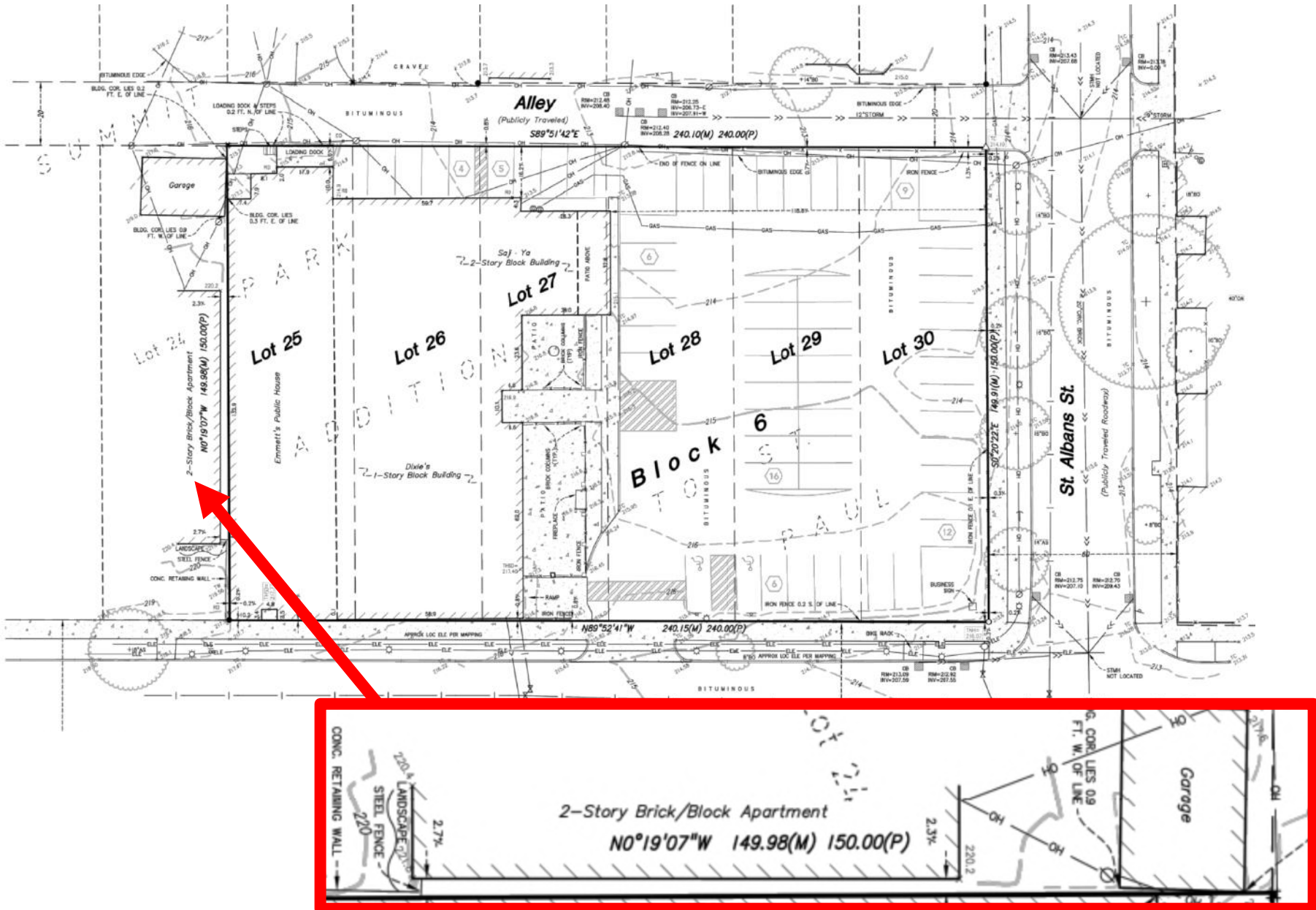


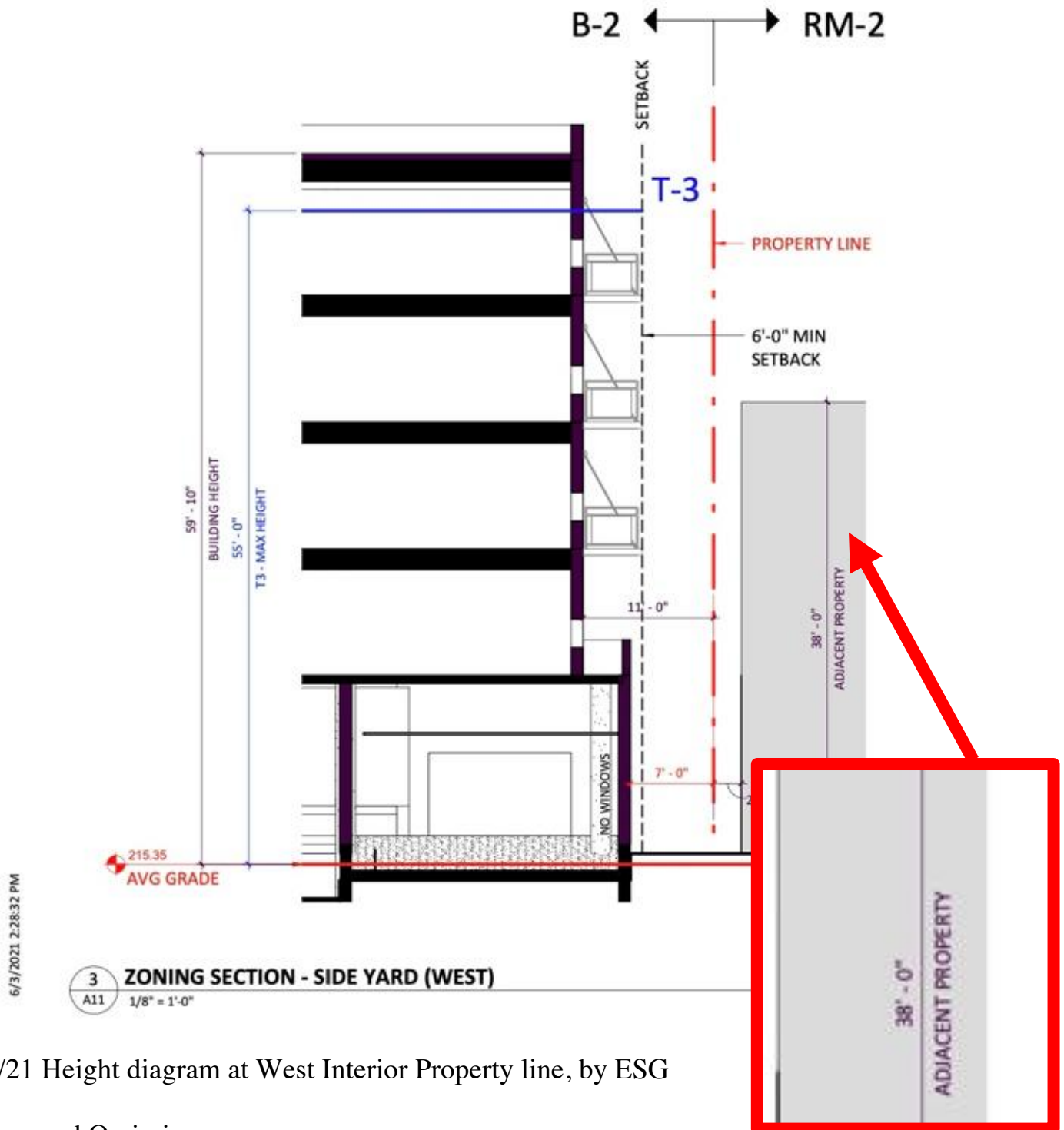
707 and 711 Grand, properties directly at West of Interior Property line, by Google Streetview

Errors and Omissions:

Properties are clearly only 2-stories. A professional would know that a 2-story building is not 37 feet tall.

Survey also shows as “2-story Brick/Block Apartment”;
Field measure of building establish height as 25’-0” with 24” grade





6/3/21 Height diagram at West Interior Property line, by ESG

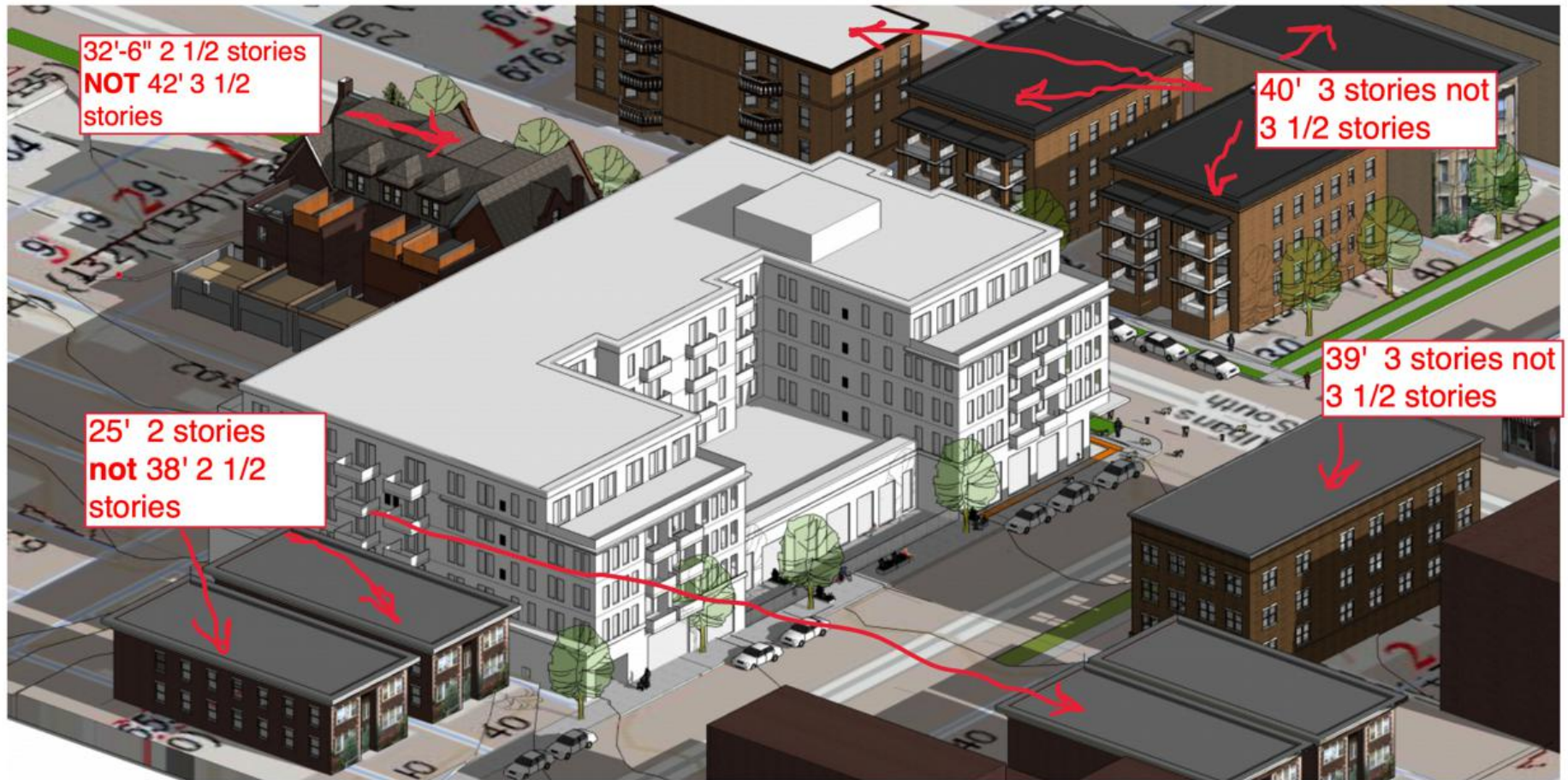
Errors and Omissions:

The height diagram shows an **inaccurate height for the neighboring 2-story apartment building at 707 Grand. NOW SHOWN AS 38'-0"**

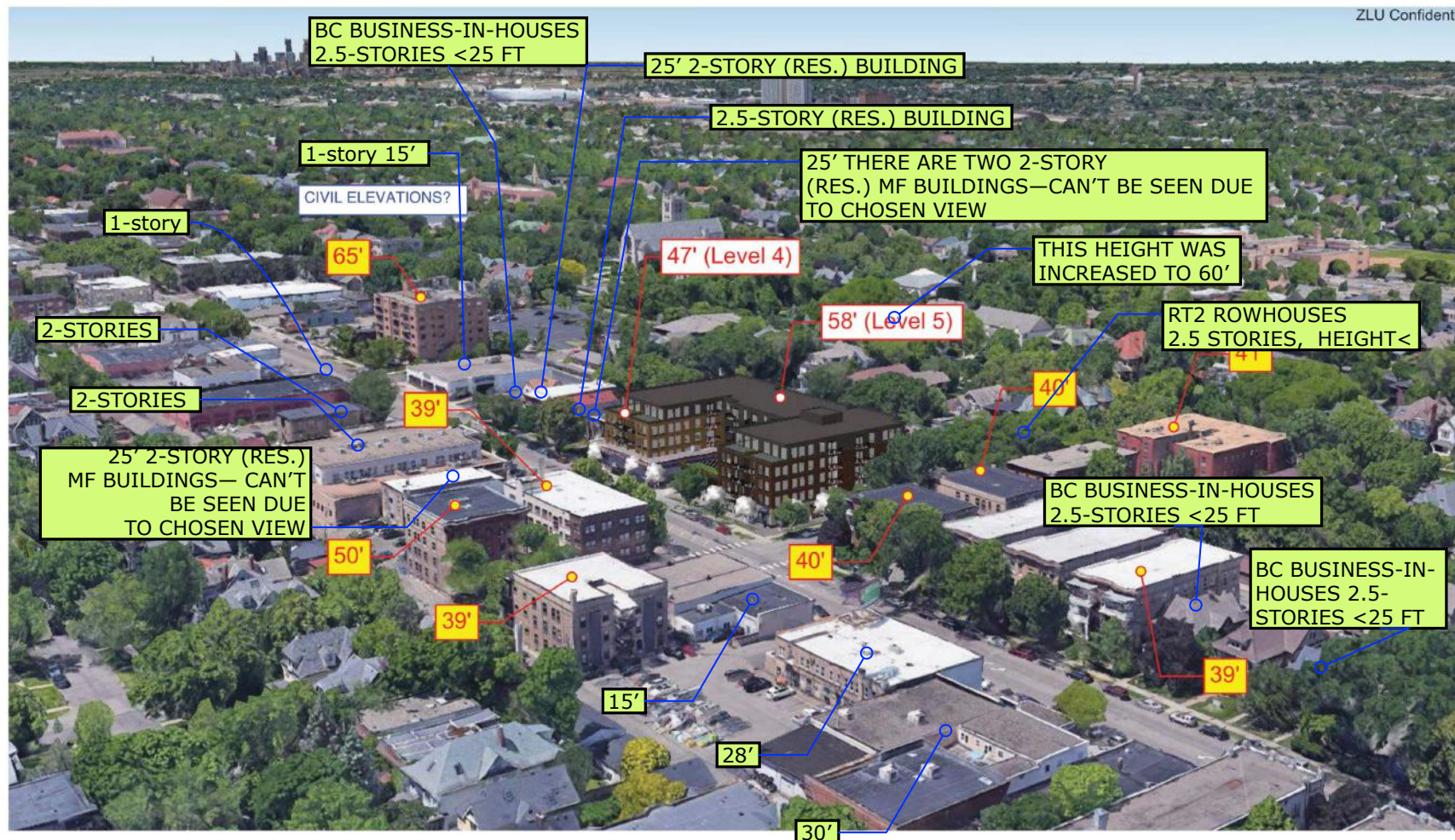
Fails to show current B2 limits, T2 limits, or EG limits, or "stepback" diagonal for T3.



Extreme difference in Height







DEVELOPER PROVIDED BIRDESEYE, WITH ADDED NOTES IN GREEN: DEVELOPER NARRATIVE OMITTS ALL SHORTER HEIGHTS, AND FAILS TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURES AND MIXED USE; RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURES HAVE A 40 FT HEIGHT LIMIT DUE (PER EG OVERLAY) DUE TO THE ABOVE-GRADE MAIN FLOOR. OF THE 20+ SURROUNDING BUILDINGS WITHIN THE 350 FEET NOTIFICATION AREA, ALL BUT ONE (62 ST ALBANS) MEET THE EG HEIGHT LIMITS. ADDITIONALLY, ALL HAVE MUCH SMALLER LOT COVERAGE, SMALLER FOOTPRINTS, AND GREATER SETBACKS THAN 695 PROPOSAL. THE 65' SUBURBAN-STYLE MID-RISE AT GROTTO AND GRAND IS ONE OF THE REASON THE OVERLAY WAS ESTABLISHED—TO PREVENT SIMILARLY INAPPROPRIATE BUILDINGS.



Extreme Difference in Lot Coverage and footprint

