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Title: Amending open space lot specific standards for the Ford Site Zoning and Public Realm Master Plan.

Sponsors: Chris Tolbert

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Attachments: 1. Lynn Varco Public Comment, 2. RES 21-686 - Jim Ginther, 3. Res 21-686 - Catherine M. Hunt, 4. RES 21-686 - Kathryn McGuire, 5. RES 21-686 - Howard J. Miller

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
5/7/2021	1	Mayor's Office	Signed	
5/5/2021	1	City Council	Adopted	Pass

Amending open space lot specific standards for the Ford Site Zoning and Public Realm Master Plan.

WHEREAS, on September 17, 2017 the City Council commenced the redevelopment phase of Ford Motor Company's former Twin City Assembly Plant ("Ford Site") by adopting the Ford Site Zoning and Public Realm Master Plan ("Master Plan") and adding new ordinances to the zoning code under Leg. Code §§ 66.900 to 66.950 ("Ford Ordinances") which, under Leg. Code § 66.911, are "designed specifically for the Ford site for use with the Ford Site Zoning and Public Realm Master Plan, which provides additional standards for specific building types and standards to address sustainability objectives"; and

WHEREAS, the Ford Ordinances and the Master Plan established various standards for each zoning district within the Ford Site, now branded as "Highland Bridge," to facilitate, with other policy objectives, a balance in building mass and transition space to public rights-of way through the application of so-called "area" standards, which include building setbacks, building lot coverage and open space lot coverage, building mass, density and floor area ratio standards for each Ford Site zoning district; and

WHEREAS, following the adoption of the Master Plan and the Ford Ordinances, as permitted under Leg. Code § 66.952, the documents have been twice amended; first on April 10, 2019 and again on May 6, 2020; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Leg. Code § 66.952, the Ford Site "master developer" was also required to prepare a plat of the Ford Site which was subsequently submitted and approved by the City on November 20, 2019; and

WHEREAS, the Ford Site plat effectively divided the Ford Site into 36 development parcels and also dedicated to the public various land parcels deemed necessary for public rights-of-way and park and open space areas within the Ford Site as envisioned under the Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, with the adoption of the Master Plan, Ford District ordinances and Ford Site plat, the Ford Site master developer, together with its sub-developers, have begun to submit Ford Site development proposals which were reviewed by City planning and zoning staff against the Master Plan standards and the Ford District ordinances; and

WHEREAS, City planning staff review of the initial development applications caused them to determine that the regulations of Lot Coverage by Open Space and Green Roof Areas as Open Space, envisioned under

present Master Plan standards and their associated Ford Site ordinances, presented difficulties in evaluating and applying them to development applications and, with the certain knowledge that future development applications will be forthcoming, planning staff recommend that amendments to these standards be considered in light of these difficulties; and

WHEREAS, for example, City planning staff note that it is difficult to implement the Lot Coverage by Open Space and Green Roof Areas as Open Space concepts under the Master Plan with other Master Plan area regulations which are applicable to building setbacks, floor area ratios, lot coverage by buildings, and design standards intended to set a “soft edge” between private buildings and public sidewalks in order to create a comfortable and attractive pedestrian environment within the Ford Site as envisioned under the Master Plan, with actual site-specific conditions like parcel size or topography; and

WHEREAS, City planning staff further advise that the Master Plan’s vision for Functional Green Roofs as a means to improve stormwater management, reduce greenhouse gases, reduce urban heat island effect, and promote sustainable and efficient energy use is compromised by a lack of specificity in the language of the Master Plan for calculating bonuses; and

WHEREAS, City planning staff propose the following amendments to the Master Plan and the Ford Site zoning ordinances to address these present difficulties when future development applications are received by staff for review:

1. Remove the term “Open Space” from the Master Plan as it pertains to privately owned development parcels and lots and remove the definition of Green Roof Areas as Open Space. This amendment would not impact publicly owned park and open space parcels and lots dedicated to the City via the November 20, 2019 Ford plat.
2. Add the definition for “Lot Coverage by Buildings” from the Ford Site zoning ordinances to Master Plan Chapter 5 entitled “Building and Lot Terminology.”
3. Amend the Master Plan’s current incentive language for Green Roofs in Chapter 4: Zoning - Districts and General Standards, as follows:

Lot Coverage Bonus for Green Roof Areas

Projects that provide Functional Green Roof can receive a 1% lot coverage by buildings bonus for every 1% of Functional Green Roof provided by the project, up to a maximum 10% lot coverage by buildings bonus.; and

WHEREAS, it is the further recommendation of City planning staff that the proposed amendments be treated as “major amendments” to the Master Plan which, pursuant to Leg. Code § 66.951(b), permits the City Council to approve major amendments to the Master Plan by resolution following a review and recommendation from the Planning Commission and a public hearing before the Council; NOW,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Council of the City of Saint Paul hereby requests the Planning Commission to initiate a study of amending the Ford Site Master Plan as proposed above from City planning staff and to submit a report and recommendation regarding the proposed amendments to the City Council as expeditiously as possible for Council action.