

**Excerpt from the  
CITY PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES  
Minneapolis Community Planning & Economic Development (CPED)**

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**MEMORANDUM**

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DATE: October 10, 2013

TO: Zoning and Planning Committee

FROM: Jason Wittenberg, Manager, Community Planning & Economic Development – Land Use, Design and Preservation

SUBJECT: Planning Commission decisions of September 16, 2013

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The following actions were taken by the Planning Commission on September 16, 2013. As you know, the Planning Commission's decisions on items other than rezonings, text amendments, vacations, 40 Acre studies and comprehensive plan amendments are final subject to a ten calendar day appeal period before permits can be issued.

Commissioners present: President Tucker, Brown, Cohen, Huynh, Kronzer, Luepke-Pier, Schiff, Slack and Wielinski – 9

Not present: Gagnon (excused)

Committee Clerk: Lisa Kusz (612) 673-3710

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**7. Loring Park Master Plan (Ward: 5 and 7) (Beth Elliott).**

**A. Master Plan:** Considering adoption of the *Loring Park Neighborhood Master Plan*. The *Loring Park Neighborhood Master Plan* is a long-range planning document that provides greater detail for public and private land investment and development in the Loring Park neighborhood.

**Action:** The City Planning Commission recommended that the City Council **adopt** the Loring Park Neighborhood Master Plan as an articulation of and amendment to the policies found in the City's Comprehensive Plan and direct staff to begin a rezoning study to implement the adopted policy with these changes:

- Add a sentence to the end of policy 2.14: *Nightclubs, however, should continue to be prohibited along Nicollet Avenue south of Grant Street.*
- Eliminate the yellow hatch marks on Yale Place, Spruce Street, and Hawthorne Avenue from the Land Use Plan map.

- Add language to the final sentence in policy 2.24 to clarify that all applicable policies for the *Loring Hill Design Guidelines* have been brought into the plan as follows: The wording of this master plan takes precedence *and all applicable policies have been added to the plan without a requirement to refer back to the guidelines document itself.*
- Clarify the paragraph on Foundation in policy 2.26: The appearance of future renovation or redevelopment in the Loring Hill district should be consistent with the *Loring Hill Design Guidelines* as ~~interpreted through~~ *included in* this neighborhood plan.
- Clarify the paragraph on Relationship of Buildings to Street in policy 2.26: To enhance the walking environment, frontage design and the relationship of buildings to the public sidewalk and street should follow the principles established in ~~section 2.6 of the *Loring Hill Design Guidelines*~~ *this plan.*
- Eliminate the paragraph on Architectural Standards in policy 2.26 as it requires the reader to seek reference from the *Loring Hill Design Guidelines* document when all applicable sections should be in the plan.
- In the Public Realm chapter on page 10, add this sentence to the introductory paragraph under the Streets section: *While these Loring Park Plan recommendations provide a certain level of specificity, the City may need to achieve the intent of the Plan's recommendations through alternative design solutions based on current best practices which are feasible and practical to implement and maintain.*
- Because road functional classifications are set at the State level, eliminate policy 4.7 that requests a reclassification of Oak Grove Street in this plan.
- Change areas on Loring Hill with a three-story height recommendation to four stories.

**Aye:** Brown, Cohen, Huynh, Kronzer, Luepke-Pier, Slack and Wielinski

**Absent:** Schiff

Staff Elliott presented the staff report.

**Commissioner Cohen:** With the activity center, I notice a sentence added here “nightclubs should continue to be prohibited along Nicollet Ave S at Grant St.” I know some concern has been expressed by residents in the area about the effects of noise, activities connected with nightclubs. I’m asking if this particular sentence was recently added in order to meet those concerns.

**Staff Elliott:** It was.

**Commissioner Cohen:** My next question is, what is the current zoning in the activity center area and what is your proposed zoning in the activity center area?

**Staff Elliott:** We are not proposing zoning with this recommendation, this is a policy document. One of the first steps after this will be to do a rezoning study.

**Commissioner Cohen:** Give me a general strategic concept; what zoning would meet your objectives here?

**Staff Elliott:** I can’t tell you exactly how we would rezone. What I can tell you is the common zoning classification in activity centers is our C3A activity center zoning classification. It allows for a variety of commercial uses, residential uses, a height of up to four stories and it usually allows nightclubs and hotels and it allows for small storefront uses.

**Commissioner Cohen:** What would C2 do?

**Staff Elliott:** I'm not prepared to speak to the nuances of every zoning classification today, but C2 is our medium intensity commercial district. I'll ask Jason to add in where needed, but C2 is a commercial classification that we use along many commercial corridors. It allows some other uses like auto oriented uses that are sometimes not desirable in some neighborhoods, but they have spacing requirements so that's why we would need to evaluate very closely how to use something like C2.

**Staff Wittenberg:** If I could add, a couple of key differences between C2 and C3A is that larger scale commercial uses are allowed, nightclubs and hotels are not allowed in C2.

**Commissioner Wielinski:** You said the plan would try to keep potential large scale development on Nicollet lower...

**Staff Elliott:** Would it help if I described what a development could be along Nicollet? The built form plan and the future land use plan put together along Nicollet would allow a mixed use building. The desire of the neighborhood would be to have ground floor commercial uses, something else above and up to six stories.

**Commissioner Wielinski:** Is it my understanding that the properties along here would be part of the captured district to pay for the streetcars?

**Staff Elliott:** There has been an initial capture of what I would call a disparate number of properties, one of those is the Magellan project at 14<sup>th</sup> and LaSalle that is currently going up the residential tower, but a lot of those properties have already been identified and they were properties that have already seen proposed development and are potentially under construction right now. I don't know if any of these low intensity properties along Nicollet right now are in that capture area.

**Commissioner Wielinski:** Ok, I was just concerned that you would be designating properties in a way that would now prohibit you from getting the streetcars.

**Commissioner Kronzer:** The activity center, it splits a block right in the middle. Is that typical? Does that happen anywhere else in the city?

**Staff Elliott:** Activity centers are certainly areas where we have specific boundaries and it's mainly so we can focus the commercial and residential intensity within that boundary. There is going to be residential intensity outside of this boundary. It's not ideal that it splits blocks. The boundaries could be adjusted so they don't split blocks.

**Commissioner Kronzer:** It seems like we're designing conflict into this boundary. We have this alternate activity center boundary; I'm wondering what that's all about.

**Staff Elliott:** The neighborhood could speak to that better than I can once they're able to come up here. There was one recognition that sections of Eat Street and Nicollet Ave south of the freeway that had a lot of the same characteristics as it did north. Toward the end of the planning process, the neighborhood did go meet with the Stevens Square Community Organization and talk to them about extending the boundary. I am not supporting that recommendation at this point because it wasn't part of the full community process. The same thing with the boundary to the north. We are recommending the bold red boundary unless there is a desire to capture full parcels rather than cutting through parcels.

**Commissioner Kronzer:** Question about the built form plan, I'm wondering why it doesn't identify existing heights. In the Loring Hill area, the Summit House, it's identified as white and that's clearly not three stories

or even ten stories. I think that's a little confusing as far as you're not identifying what's on the ground today versus what's proposed as part of the plan. I think part of the plan should recognize these taller buildings and how to develop new around them. Maybe that's just a comment.

**Staff Elliott:** The built form plan is meant to be future guidance rather than representing existing conditions, but that's why I mentioned one of the challenges with the built form plan on Loring Hill is that it speaks more to the lower intensity buildings versus some of the taller buildings that do crop up within the hill.

**Commissioner Kronzer:** Do we know when the zoning study is going to occur to update zoning per, when and if this plan does get adopted?

**Staff Elliott:** I would expect someone like me would be doing this later next year.

**Commissioner Kronzer:** We've seen where studies happen, policies get approved and zoning trails and...

**Staff Elliott:** One of the first steps will be doing the Comprehensive Plan amendment and that will take a little bit of time.

**Commissioner Cohen:** Question about streetcars, are we in the study phase, the proposal phase or the implementation phase?

**Staff Elliott:** We are finishing up the analysis phase which is basically looking at how long the line will be, how far into northeast it goes, how far into southwest it goes as well as the mode. I believe there will be a presentation to the City Council in the next month on that.

**Commissioner Cohen:** So that takes us beyond the study phase to the proposal phase?

**Staff Elliott:** What will happen after this is that it will be a preliminary engineering phase is my understanding. Once the route is chosen and the means is chosen then you start identifying where the stations will be and how to design it within the right of way.

**Commissioner Slack:** I'm looking at the last sheet related to public realm improvements, what streets are designated as one-way conversion to two-way or are there any?

**Staff Elliott:** I don't think we have any. Access Minneapolis had identified a number of conversions a few years ago and I don't think there are any in this neighborhood.

**Commissioner Slack:** What was the determination on prioritizing the streets that are highlighted in green versus some of the other streets that are not highlighted like Yale or parts of Nicollet?

**Staff Elliott:** Since I can't answer those questions, maybe neighborhood staff, a steering committee member or the consultant can answer those questions.

President Tucker opened the public hearing.

**John Van Heel (110 W Grant St):** I'm the chair of the Loring Park Neighborhood Master Plan steering committee. I'd like to ask for your support for this plan, not just because the plan is in line with City's goals, but also because the neighborhood has fulfilled the challenging task of making this a truly community driven plan. For the Loring Park neighborhood that means dedicated residents but also a lot more. Today, Loring

Park serves as one of the City's most visible and important centers of urban activity. It is the setting for major religious, cultural and educational institutions and the location of many diverse and creative businesses. It is the home of the Minneapolis Convention Center and of Loring Park, a place that as much as any serves our city as a central square. I believe that this master plan has succeeded in drawing together the common interests of an incredibly rich mix of residents, institutions and businesses. This master plan demonstrates through cooperative planning, faith that we can make the neighborhood a more livable place for residents while at the same time recognize and plan in context of the larger role that we play as a major destination for the city and region. This master plan provides important direction for a neighborhood that is a pedestrian crossroads where an outstanding park and an equally outstanding network of green corridors connects visitors to important destinations and also residents to downtown jobs and transit. Like nowhere else in the city, in Loring Park, owning a car can be the exception rather than the rule. This plan provides important direction for improvement to our community sustainability. Through an innovative use of LEED certification, the neighborhood will be able to celebrate and build on the many sustainable attributes that it already has an inner city neighborhood. It will also provide a tool for the community to become more sustainable and energy efficient. This leadership is good for our residents, our neighborhood and for the city. The Loring Park Neighborhood master plan provides important direction on future land use. The Loring neighborhood is widely known, not just for its beautiful park, but also for its historic buildings and its urban fabric. The plan provides a pathway to preserve critical historic resources while at the same time that it provides direction and a vision in how to grow our [tape ended]...the plan finds that there are two areas that are out of sync. The historic ridge that runs along the south side of Loring Park has come to be known as Loring Hill in our neighborhood. For a city that Wikipedia describes as flat, this gentle slope of land with a 19<sup>th</sup> century soul speaks powerfully to us about what it means to be at home in our city. This is true for those that live on the hill, but also for those like me who live farther away. The master plan provides important direction on preservation options, density and development guidelines that will help protect the scale and character of this cherished place. Regarding Nicollet Ave, this is the one place where this plan finds a conflict in the City's current plan and zoning. The majority of our stretch of Nicollet south of the downtown district is zoned C1. This is not only inconsistent with the City's own goals for growing its population and for developing its first new streetcar line, it also does not fulfill the hopes and desires of the Loring Park community. There was a time when the commercial historic district that ran down Nicollet from Grant St to Franklin was as much at the center of neighborhood life as Loring Park. With the rise of the automobile, this has changed. Construction of I-94 split the commercial district in half as it did the neighborhood. The Loring Park and Stevens Square communities have worked for decades to revitalize this struggling corridor. It is a primary focus of the master plan and it was a major impetus for the plans making. It is the desire of the community to see the avenues empty lots redeveloped with new theater and dining options, more neighborhood goods and services, more hospitality and more places to live. The community is hoping for an active and urban corridor that has unique Loring character. The gap toothed place we see today keeps neighborhood residents away. Our stretch of Nicollet has the best collection of international restaurants in all of downtown Minneapolis. Yet today, when I have lunch or dinner at one of these restaurants, the people sitting at the table next to me are more likely to be from someplace from across the cities or from across the country than they are likely to be from the neighborhood. The convention center is right there. Hundreds of hotel rooms are also right there. In recommending an activity center designation for Nicollet Ave, we are acknowledging the central location we have and the very public role that we play as a neighborhood. The role can be beneficial to our businesses and also to our residents. Contrary to any suggestion that an activity center designation would be a license allowing everything we don't want, this plan rests on the belief that it is instead a valuable tool to get what we do want. Nightclubs are not an issue. The CLPC board supports the city staff recommendation to prohibit them. Like other Minneapolis neighborhoods that have safe and successful activity centers, the Loring neighborhood is up to the task of using this designation as a tool to organize and draw investment. It will form the basis for a strengthened partnership with the streets businesses and cultural organizations strength and partnership with the city and the convention center. A strengthened partnership with adjacent properties and nearby residents so

that issues like safety and parking can be addressed. As a universally recognized term, being an activity center will help the neighborhood to attract the kind of high quality transit oriented development that the neighborhood hopes for and which I think the city needs if it is to build its first new streetcar line. The activity center is in this neighborhoods interest and I believe it is in the City's interest. I am proud of this neighborhood and what they've accomplished in creating this plan. I think it is a product of an intelligent and forward looking community. I believe it deserves your support.

**Peter Musty (4140 38<sup>th</sup> Ave S) [not on sign-in sheet]:** I'm an urban design consultant for CLPC.

**Commissioner Cohen:** I have a question. Let me take you back in the day a little bit. The best vote I ever cast while I was in City Hall was the vote against closing Nicollet when I was on the Planning Commission over 30 years ago, but Nicollet was closed anyway. My question to you is this, if we were to approve a streetcar line here, what role would that play in reopening Nicollet Ave, which we've been trying to reopen for some 30 years.

**Peter Musty:** I'm going to try to answer, but my scope is really Loring Park neighborhood. I worked on the Lake Street development objective study some time ago and I guess what you're asking is...could you restate your question for me?

**Commissioner Cohen:** I'm trying to justify in my own mind, my vote for this plan. I love the plan, but I'm not a streetcar guy. As a consolation prize, if I can manage to put an end to this ridiculous Viking Stadium plan, maybe I can be convinced on the streetcars. I could possibly be convinced if somebody could tell me "this is the basis for reopening Nicollet Ave." If we can finally open Nicollet Ave, it might be worth the price you pay.

**Staff Elliott:** I believe it is more about politics than staff policy, but it is one of the goals of the streetcar study to reopen Nicollet and there are some other studies going on on the K-Mart site to better identify goals and objectives to removing K-Mart or moving it to a new building so Nicollet Ave can be reopened.

**Commissioner Slack:** My question was about one-way conversions. I can't tell which streets those are. Can you talk a little about the conversions and the goals to convert these streets?

**Peter Musty:** We went through extensive community meetings and focus groups. We gathered a lot of community input. I will refer you to the discovery reports. There are four discovery reports. They came along in parallel to the community process. The policy chapter that sort of embodies the results of this process has recommendations. There was some discussion about some one-way pairs working. I'm not sure the neighborhood was strongly in favor one way or the other on this. Our general sense was that the neighborhood felt they wanted to see a one-way go to two-way on these.

**Commissioner Slack:** How are those recommendations taken from Public Works input?

**Peter Musty:** I believe they agreed with those.

**Staff Elliott:** They never actually made any comments related to that specific recommendation. The specific recommendation that you're referring to is "advocate for the conversion of one-way to two-way traffic on LaSalle and First Ave in conjunction with the reopening of Nicollet Ave at Lake St." Public Works might have been more comfortable with the language about advocating for rather than specifics on how and when.

**Commissioner Slack:** The second question related to your process for identifying streetscape improvements; I notice that there are a lot of improvements identified on a lot of the streets in the study area, but there are certain streets like Spruce and Yale that haven't been identified for streetscape improvements. My in-laws live in Loring Park so a lot of those streets are the streets that we use because of the proximity of where they live to the park. I'm wondering the process and why the determination was made for some streets and not others.

**Peter Musty:** We did a walkabout. We had focus groups with the community. I think early on there was the identification that this pattern works right now, so let's preserve and enhance it. What you see is what rose out of the discovery report as being important.

**Commissioner Slack:** Do they also look at the narrowing of roadways, bump outs, traffic calming and other aspects?

**Peter Musty:** Yes. Safe crossings to the park is a major section and there are district based guidelines.

**Jeff Seiler (27 W 14<sup>th</sup> St):** I live in the Kensington apartment building. It's located almost in the center of the Loring Park neighborhood. When I received the notice for this meeting, I became concerned. I suspected that it might affect me, but I knew nothing about it being that I moved into my apartment building in June of this year. Having read the pertinent parts of the March 2013, as well as the June 2013 versions, I have become very concerned about the future of the Kensington, the apartment building in which I live. I am permanently disabled and on a fixed income. I am not the only such person living in the building. I moved into the building in June after a lengthy search for affordable low income housing. The most curious thing has occurred to me after my lengthy in-depth perusal of the Master Plan. If one were to do transparency overlays, which I have not yet had time to do, a possibly coincidentally thing with potentially shattering consequences becomes obvious. That is, if one were to make a transparency overlay of the proposed activity center map, the westernmost border of which reaches to the alleyway bordering the east side of the Kensington apartment building and a transparency overlay of the aerial photograph on page 24 of Chapter 3 and a transparency overlay of the land use plan figure 2C, a curious thing begins to become crystal clear. Taking into consideration that the western most border of the proposed activity center stops at an alleyway between Nicollet and LaSalle, the east side of the Kensington apartment building and that the northeastern most boundary of the so-called apartment district stops at the alleyway located at the back of the Kensington apartment building and that across LaSalle Ave towards Loring Park from the Kensington apartment building is Emerson School, which is labeled as public and institutional property and therefore untouchable under the Master Plan. Across LaSalle Ave on the northeast corner from the Kensington apartment building is the new Magellan luxury high-rise building, presumably another untouchable under the Master Plan. Across 14<sup>th</sup> St to the north of the Kensington apartment building is the Volunteers of America high-rise low income apartment complex, another untouchable. Directly behind, to the south of the Kensington apartment building, is the aforementioned fenced off concrete slab that is nonetheless designated as part of the so-called apartment district as well as an apparently proposed surface parking lot outside activity center according to figure 2D. These overlays would reveal something interesting. The Kensington apartment building is surrounded on all four sides by all of these maps and figures, yet nothing is mentioned or proposed in the Master Plan about preserving or conserving or protecting or utilizing the Kensington apartment building, other than it could be rezoned for nonresidential use. I hope that the commission can understand why after in-depth research of the two most recent version of the Master Plan, I feel as though the Kensington apartment building have had a big red target painted right on top of them. I agree with point seven of Ms. Elliott's recommended motion and move that the proposed apartment district be amended to include the Kensington. I do not wish to be displaced or relocated.

**Neil Reardon (11 S 12<sup>th</sup> St):** I've lived in the neighborhood for about six years. I'm the CLPC land use committee chair, board member and member of the steering committee. I've been a part of this Master Plan since the beginning. This plan is really going to do a lot to guide development throughout the neighborhood. I support this plan and hope you consider the adoption of it.

**Mark Nelson (400 Groveland Ave):** I'm on the CLPC board and on the Master Plan steering committee. I'm one of several that worked in a subcommittee on the historic resources chapter. During the public information gathering, we were pleased to see the number of people who are concerned about the historic character of our neighborhood, not just the architecture, but the setback, the green space, the streetscape and the scale of proposed development. In our work on the chapter, we consulted several cities like Philadelphia. We used their guidelines as a basis for our creation of the developer's guidelines for development in the neighborhood. I ask for your approval of the plan.

**Michael Pipkin (1730 Clifton Place):** I represent the bishop and trustees of the Episcopal Church of Minnesota. Our property, along with St Mark's Cathedral and the Pink House Mansion at 425 Oak Grove represent 4.4 acres of property in the Loring Park neighborhood, specifically all on Loring Hill. We are proud and pleased to be members of Loring Park. I speak in support of the Master Plan and am proud that members of our team have participated in its development. One issue that I would like to emphasize is the need for district and shared parking on the hill. It's a need that has become more acute with recent development. We see opportunities for the Episcopal Church of Minnesota to be a part of a solution to this problem but the present classification of our property as intensity A in the proposed Master Plan with a height limitation of three stories, potentially restricts how redevelopment of this parcel could move forward and contribute to a parking solution that would benefit all in Loring Park. It would be our desire for any redevelopment to be consistent with the Loring Hill Design Guidelines and we would incorporate neighborhood input and review, but any redevelopment at this location would need to be a designation of intensity C in order to make it financially viable. Your consideration of this matter is very much appreciated.

**George Puzak (1780 Girard Ave S):** I own the apartment building at 322 Clifton Ave. On May 1, I submitted a letter to Beth Elliott. The Loring Park Master Plan has many worthwhile features and I support most of them. However, the plan divides Loring Hill into five sub areas. The boundaries of these sub areas are arbitrary and artificial because Loring Hill is one continuous neighborhood connected by narrow streets. Loring Hill right now is dominated by three huge residential towers. The Oak Grove tower is 20 stories. The Summit House towers at 400-410 Groveland are 24 and 21 stories tall. Despite their massive presence, these towers receive little mention in the plan. The plan draws an arbitrary line down Clifton Ave and assigns both Summit House towers to the south edge. The plan suggests that the impacts of these towers are confined to the south edge. The plan ignores the reality that the buildings in one subarea, the south edge, especially these massive towers, significantly impact the streetscape and buildings in the other subdistricts. The reality is that these towers dominate and shade the upper terrace and the entire hill. The plan is flawed because it arbitrarily assigns both towers to the south edge. It is also flawed because it fails to consider the impact of these towers on the adjoining subdistricts. For these reasons, I recommend that you reject the Loring Hill portion of the plan. If you do accept the plan, I urge you to modify the Loring Hill section as follows: Please make a finding that some nonhistoric structures are confined between massive 20+ story towers on the south and west and by seven to 13 story buildings on the north on Oak Grove and W 15<sup>th</sup> St. Please designate that nonhistoric structures on Loring Hill retain their current land use designations and zoning. That is OR3, six stories. I purchased my property in 2004 because of the zoning and off-street parking. I've tried to maintain it in an orderly fashion and have good tenants in there. Part of the plan is to protect the mansions. It's important that we protect the mansions in the entire Loring Neighborhood by allowing owners to designate them for historic or conservation or preservation plans. We don't need to downzone the historic mansions to protect them. We can designate them historically to protect them. Two things could be done to help 15<sup>th</sup> and Nicollet. One

thing, extend the Nicollet Mall district down to Grant St and also open up Nicollet at Lake St to provide for the free flow of the public realm through the neighborhood. I think with those two modifications in the city, a lot of the planning that this document hopes to achieve would be facilitated at 15<sup>th</sup> and Nicollet. Thank you.

**Colleen Foster (510 Groveland Ave):** I'm here on behalf of our association and about 60 residents. We've been actively involved in the dialogue and discussions about the Master Plan. I was one of the co-chairs in the early development of the Loring Hill Design Guidelines. We voted in our association and it was 100% unanimous that we support the current version of the Master Plan and hope that you will endorse it as it is written exactly and help preserve the personality and character of our neighborhood.

**Kelly Muellman (116 Oak Grove):** I'm going to be speaking to the sustainability chapter. I'm in support of the plan. City Council recently adopted the Climate Action Plan for the city. This sustainability chapter describes how through certifying the neighborhood as the first existing neighborhood to go through LEED neighborhood development and including measureable goals and energy, water efficiency, waste reduction and increased walkability, this plan will move the city towards its sustainability goals outlined in the Climate Action Plan. It will enable the neighborhood to stand out as an exceptional example in the city and the state as well as improve the quality of life of the residents. In addition to supporting the entire plan, I just want to particularly focus on the sustainability chapter. I think this will advance a lot of the policies that the city is already in favor of. Thank you.

**Diane Hansen (26 Oak Grove):** I'm with Copenhagen Enterprises. We have apartment buildings. We've owned apartment buildings in that area for ...when we bought them they were about 70-80 years old and now they're pushing 100. We've been hoping for something to happen on Nicollet Ave that would improve it. There's been this blank space between Grant and Franklin and this is probably the best thing I've seen as far as some potential activity that could improve things for our tenants. I have about 150 residents that live in that area. They probably don't really care whether or not there is an activity center near them. What they do care about is that the neighborhood is safe and there are places for them to shop and that the streets are walkable and they can enjoy the area around them. I'm concerned that this area will become attractive to developers because the way it is right now there is just nothing happening and it's not very appealing for anyone coming into the area. I'd like to speak to Commissioner Kronzer who was talking about the division between Nicollet and LaSalle. I have four buildings that are right between the alley...if you're familiar with that area, there is an alley between LaSalle and Nicollet. I am certain that this plan is going to improve things in the area. The alley right now is not a comfortable or safe place for people to walk. The way it is right now, there is residential on one side and then fairly neglected and not very attractive commercial or vacant space on the other. It's my feeling that this plan is going to make the residents much more comfortable and that division or that line right there is a good line and not a problem.

**Paul Hindorager (410 Groveland Ave):** I've lived in the neighborhood about 30 years. About the zones for the streetcars, there is another capture zone that we refer to as the meter farm. It goes from there to the freeway.

**Jana Metge (1645 Hennepin Ave) [not on sign-in sheet]:** I think it's really important to acknowledge the people that were here, but left. In support of the plan was Barb Berglund, Gail Dorfman, Eddie Frizell, three MCTC students, first precinct inspector Bryan Schafer, Joe Horan our NRP staff, Katie Hatt, Diane Woelm and Yvette Trotman. In the audience you've heard people speak, but the people that aren't speaking – we have representatives from the high rises on Nicollet, our park director, MCTC staff, the churches and property owners. Since I ran the community engagement process, I wanted to acknowledge the people that took off work and were here but had to leave. Thank you.

President Tucker closed the public hearing.

**Commissioner Cohen:** I like the plan but I don't like the streetcars. If the streetcar is not guaranteed to go through, it is nothing but an expensive toy during a period of time that we cannot afford expensive toys. If the streetcar were to go through and pierce that Lake St barrier, it would open up miles of Nicollet and be one of the best things that have ever happened to this city. I'm not hearing that this is going to happen. If it were, I could support this plan enthusiastically because I like the plan itself, but the streetcar facet of this thing isn't going to work unless it has this extra punch to it. I'm going to move approval of the plan and the conditions that are listed here with an additional condition that says we remove the streetcars from the plan at this time.

**President Tucker:** I don't hear a second for that motion.

**Commissioner Huynh:** I will move staff recommendation to adopt the small area plan for the Loring Park neighborhood with the eight conditions that staff has outlined (Slack seconded). I did work with the neighborhood for three years as a parallel process with the LEED as a board member president of the USGBC MN Chapter. We are excited that the Loring Park neighborhood accepted the challenge to be the most sustainable neighborhood in the country. This is a case study that is being used nationwide on how to apply green urban principles in existing neighborhoods. Loring Park took the challenge and are looking at adapting this in their small area plan and they have incorporated this in their design principles. I'd have to say that the neighborhood and consultants and individual board members were really committed and followed through and are continuing to work with us through this effort, not only on the small area plan but also on the sustainability efforts. I applaud and commend the neighborhood on a great small area plan and hope other neighborhoods look at the small area plan as a great example on what to do going forward.

**Commissioner Luepke-Pier:** There are eight recommendations listed but I thought I heard staff mention that they had another recommendation and I want to make sure that's included.

**Staff Elliott:** It's a revision to the second to the last bullet point that's just an additional clarification that Public Works wanted in that bullet point.

**Commissioner Kronzer:** I think there are a lot of great things in this plan. It's great to see some form based zoning aspects coming into the planning process. My one concern with this plan is the Loring Hill area. There's a lot of complexity there. I'm not sure this plan is there yet in this part of the neighborhood. While I love all of this plan, I'm a little nervous about setting up future conflicts, especially when it comes to the rezoning study that I'm sure will follow this.

**Commissioner Brown:** I'm also impressed with the plan. I think it recognizes that this area is a major growth area for the city. I do have an issue with one thing and that's the language limiting the heights along the Nicollet corridor itself to six stories. I feel that is an important corridor in the city and location of future transit investments. I can get on board with that recommendation considering the accommodation of density elsewhere in the plan. Overall I think it's great and I support the motion.

**Commissioner Huynh:** Although the rezoning is not in front of us today, I think there are some challenges with having it be split within the block. With Loring Hill, I would entertain a ninth bullet point that addresses the re-evaluation of the heights for Loring Hill. A concern of mine is that a three story height would be a high single family or duplex. For an urban context I guess I question how that would fit. It'd be nice to see how that would continue or how this could carry forward into the rezoning. My bullet nine would be to continue evaluation of the building heights for Loring Hill beyond three stories. Three stories seems to be more single family or duplex which I don't think is the context of Loring Hill. It's grander in scale.

**Staff Elliott:** I think what we would need to do is either not approve the three stories as Commissioner Huynh is talking about and convert it to four stories or approve it as is. We need some sort of specifics on the height in order to move forward an adoption because we're adopting the plan as a whole. We either need to take it out or adjust it in order to get a full plan adopted. Otherwise I think we'd need to pause the plan and re-evaluate.

**Commissioner Huynh:** Given that scenario, I would move it to consider being four stories as a max for the Loring Hill and not three stories. I feel that would be still allowing for the context and character to be more low-rise without getting to mid-rise with five or six stories.

**Commissioner Luepke-Pier:** I will not support that recommendation. When we discussed this before, it seemed as an effort on behalf of the neighborhood to preserve the historic character and I think that if we start creeping to four stories that it will be added on to and four will become five and that goes against the nature. Sometimes when it comes to preserving the character of a district and we start picking off the low hanging fruit, all of the sudden the whole area is not going to have that consistent character that it has now. I am in favor of keeping the plan the way it is. The rest of the plan allows for that height and density. Preserving this one little jewel in the area for the sake of history in the city is worth it.

**Commissioner Kronzer:** I do have a friendly amendment to amendment number nine. On the built form map there is a nice diagram on it that says stories one through four should be a certain height and then stories five and six should step back and stories seven plus should step back again. I would propose that we say stories one through three at a certain height and then step back [tape ended]... are there any historic designation studies going on currently or in the work plan to be going on?

**Staff Elliott:** I don't know if there is some specific landmark designations going on right now on the hill. Four mansions on the hill have been designated over the last three years and there was a historic inventory which was used to identify Loring Hill, the apartment district and Loring Greenway as a potential historic district or conservation districts. That would have to be the next step in the implementation process. As many of you know, the staff is currently writing a text amendment for a conservation district to the historic ordinance. As Commissioner Kronzer was referring to, there is a piece on the bottom that is a guideline for stepping buildings back. Height is definitely a challenge on the hill but it's also the bulk of buildings so that's what we would have to look at in a rezoning study, it's not just the height of buildings but how buildings are set back from the property line as well as how they step back in order to create that void space and create the air and quality that people really like on Loring Hill.

**President Tucker:** First we will vote on Commissioner Huynh's amendment.

**Commissioner Kronzer:** I feel they are the same and should be considered as one.

**President Tucker:** Let's vote on Commissioner Huynh's amendment. That's five to two. The amendment is added. Further discussion?

**Aye:** Brown, Cohen, Huynh, Kronzer, Luepke-Pier, Slack and Wielinski

**Absent:** Schiff