

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

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 15, 2015

TO: Zoning and Planning Committee

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

SUBJECT: Planning Commission decisions of August 17, 2015

The following actions were taken by the Planning Commission on August 17, 2015. 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.

Committee Clerk

Lisa Kusz - 612.673.3710

Commissioners present

Matthew Brown, President | John Slack, Vice President | Alissa Luepke Pier, Secretary
Meg Forney | Ben Gisselman | Ryan Kronzer

Not present

Lisa Bender | Rebecca Gagnon | Theodore Tucker

2. Loring Park Rezoning Study, Ward 7.

Staff report by [Beth Elliott](#)

The City Planning Commission adopted staff findings.

A. Amending Title 20, Chapter 521 of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances Relating to Zoning Code: Zoning Districts and Maps. Amending Title 20, Chapter 551 of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances Relating to Zoning Code: Overlay Districts.

The purpose of the amendments is to make zoning map and ordinance changes to support the land use guidance in the Loring Park Neighborhood Master Plan. Proposed changes to the zoning of property would affect the primary zoning of property in the Loring Park Neighborhood as well as applicable overlay districts.

Action: The City Planning Commission found that obtaining consent signatures for the rezoning of properties from residential to commercial in the Loring Park Rezoning Study would be impractical. The City Planning Commission recommended that the City Council **approve** the zoning map amendment for the rezoning of parcels in the attached exhibits, noting the following:

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1. Keep the zoning of the Basilica properties OR3 rather than OR2 (15 16th St N, Property ID-2702924230002; 1601 Laurel Ave , Property ID-2702924220059; 1604 Laurel Ave, Property ID-2702924220071).
2. Keep the zoning of the St Mark's property OR3 rather than OR2 (515 Oak Grove St , Property ID-2702924320001).
3. Staff shall return to the City Planning Commission with recommendations related to Phase II of their recommendation within 12 months.
4. Staff shall reopen the small area plan policy guidance related to built form to reflect the decisions made in the zoning update.

Aye: Bender, Forney, Gisselman, Kronzer, Luepke-Pier, Magrino, Rockwell and Slack.

Absent: Gagnon

Staff Elliott presented the staff report.

Commissioner Bender: I've seen this a few times recently where we've had a small area plan that spoke to height specifically, but then the zoning...so if we went forward with the downzoning, my understanding is that our zoning code would still allow for people to apply for conditional use permits related to height in an amount that exceeds what the small area plan policy has stated so I wanted to confirm that that's true.

Staff Elliott: That is the case. We've been, for the last 12 years that I've been at the city, debating about the value of height guidance in the small area plan and have gone back and forth depending on the climate in the city, but when we are working with the neighborhood group we always talk about the fact that height guidance in a plan is guidance and that even if we do rezone to that height standard, there is always an opportunity for a property owner or developer to request a conditional use permit. One of the criteria that we evaluate in a CUP is consistency with the small area plan.

Commissioner Bender: I have seen that create an enormous amount of confusion and conflict recently and I have concerns about having that policy statement in the plan when the zoning doesn't really reflect that. This body and council is tied by that legal reality that our code allows for heights that exceed what this policy guidance would say. I was wondering why the Basilica zoning was recommended for change.

Staff Elliott: The Basilica was an area that the consultant didn't analyze adequately and it just fell through the cracks. The Basilica is zoned OR3. I think what we realized in the small area plan is there were some cases where sites were given a lower height that might be historically designatable or designated already, which is not a perfect way to use a small area plan, but I think that's what happened in the case of the Basilica that it got a four story height recommendation to "protect it". Because we've been using that built form plan quite stringently in this rezoning study it became evident that we wouldn't be consistent with the plan if we left the existing zoning.

Commissioner Kronzer: Thank you for the chart. First question is about the floor plans that were just discussed, the public realm, streetcar, tourism plan and the house value plan. To the best of my understanding, maybe the station area plan for a streetcar stop could mean adopted policy, the other three are not adopted policies that have direct impact on a rezoning study. I'd like clarification on that one.

Staff Monson: From my point of view, those four plans have everything to do with zoning. It's really about being able to comprehensively talk about the convention center district, both in its physical form and development potential. We've gotten pretty far down the line bringing urban design into the city to do

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something we like to call framework planning. I think that's what merited for the convention center district and would certainly have an impact. Now, all of those things have happened since the policy plan was adopted. I guess I would say the tourism master plan, what wasn't around and no one was talking about that when this policy plan was happening, including the convention center. We've been seeing a lot of growth in the city, this is one of our potential significant regional and state assets and so my position is that it absolutely is pertinent to zoning that we think about this area comprehensively.

Commissioner Kronzer: As I look over these comments, it seems like maybe a PO district overlay might be an outcome of these other studies. I guess my question is, what's the harm of in a year doing a rezoning to add a PO district or another overlay district to this area rather than put this whole thing on pause for an undisclosed amount of time?

Staff Elliott: Nicollet Ave currently has a pedestrian oriented overlay district, but as you know the PO districts are...a lot of our zoning is becoming more progressive, in some cases more than the PO district. The PO district doesn't deal with height, but it does help with the form and function of buildings. It's there right now at least as a placeholder.

Commissioner Kronzer: Can you guys look to the future to see what recommendations might be coming out of these plans that might impact what we're trying to do tonight?

Staff Monson: I think from my point of view, particularly related to the 10 story height limit, I don't think there's a lot of agreement with that. That is part of the policy plan so it would require that we look at that and look at it through the lens of what's now happening through the tourism master plan and at the hospitality zone assessment and just our own public realm framework thinking about this district much more purposefully. Whether that has a time limit associated with it, we haven't proposed that, but I do think it's pertinent. On the other side, I really think it's more about how I would like the Planning Department to proceed which is there is a strategic and tactical component to planning as well. We could take steps today and something would happen. Would it be the best outcome and leverage the value of the streetcar that is coming? Maybe not. This piece is critically important to the future visitor and user experience of convention goers. I see them working together.

Commissioner Kronzer: Is there a limit on how many times a rezoning study can happen? If we did something tonight and then a year from now there's a proposal to rezone something again, is that not allowed?

Staff Monson: Rezoning will then have a consequence, which is development and that could be a 30 year pause. My position is let's do it right. I think a lot of people have the same values, the same qualitative outcome in mind. I'm strategic and tactical and so I would like to take other steps first in advance of this step.

Commissioner Kronzer: What about timeframe? When will be the recommendations be coming, do you have a sense?

Staff Monson: I don't think we have a timeframe yet for the tourism master plan in place. The hospitality zone assessment is about a six month endeavor. The public realm framework will hopefully be moving through council in the first quarter of 2016. The streetcar has been moving very slowly, slower than anticipated. We hope we see legislative action in 2016, but it's not a guarantee.

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Commissioner Magrino: I think in the initial recommendations that came out, I'm thinking of one property, the LPM apartment tower was initially proposed to be downzoned to OR3 and then we ended up keeping it the same because we didn't want to create nonconforming uses so why didn't we apply that to all of the buildings around Loring Park?

Staff Elliott: The LPM project was a specific instance where we would've been creating nonconforming uses on the ground floor that were just moving in and so we try in a rezoning study to limit the amount of nonconforming uses. This was a specific instance that we found where that would've been a negative effect almost immediately because of the limited amount and square footage of commercial and retail that can go into OR districts.

Commissioner Magrino: So it was the uses.

Staff Elliott: Yes.

Commissioner Bender: It'd be helpful to understand more detail about the other consequences of changing the zoning from OR3 to OR2. There's the built form question...some of the tools we use around there, we have a limited set of tools we're using to try to control the built form, but since we're using use zoning, what are the other consequences of changing that zoning?

Staff Elliott: So besides the height...in OR3 property owners are allowed six stories by right. In OR2 they're allowed four stories by right. The only other differences are that in the OR3, major institutions like hospitals and universities are allowed and they're not allowed in OR2.

President Brown: Can you remind me what the maximum FAR in each is? Ok, 2.5 vs 3.5. Do you have a general sense of the typical apartment buildings that are in that Loring Hill area and what the FAR is?

Staff Elliott: I don't. As you recall, we did do an analysis over the summer during our outreach. We had one of our urban designers on our team and he did a great visualization analysis of the hill to see how OR2 would accommodate buildings on what are basically surface parking lots right now on Loring Hill. That showed the setbacks and height and it was our analysis as staff that the OR2 really encapsulated a lot of the ideas in the plan related to a step effect going up the hill as well as setbacks for light and air. There are a lot of mansions on the hill that have that character and OR really supports that type of development.

President Brown opened the public hearing.

Christopher Hoffer (510 Groveland Ave): I'm a current board chair of the Citizen's for a Loring Park Community and I'd like to take a few minutes to tell you how we got here. I know you've had an opportunity to review the plan. The City Council approved the master plan in the fall of 2013, but clearly the work had begun much sooner than that. The ability to proceed with this master plan was a direct result of the neighborhood's 2009 NRP Phase II plan. That produced the funding source when coupled with thousands of hours of volunteer work permitted a viable master plan process to begin. Our goal was to create a gold standard of community outreach, engagement, participation and have that occur through a transparent process and I believe this has happened. A steering committee was founded with John Van Heel as co-chair. The steering committee laid out four general phases – community involvement, discovery, synthesizing the results and developing the master plan. This ultimately involved over 1500 participants during 2011 and 2012. If you look at page 7 and 8 of the master plan, it highlights the community engagement that was undertaken, specifically the 15 separate community meetings, workshops and focus groups held in addition

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to the ten specific stakeholder interviews. This process involved park staff, city staff, elected representatives, business owners, landlords, tenants, students, homeowners, condo boards, institutional representatives including the churches and MCTC including neighborhoods, students, parishioners and small business owners. In the workshop meetings and focus groups covered by this diverse group of neighbors and the Loring Park community, we covered the history of the neighborhood, the creative businesses that we seek to grow, the historic preservation that we want to occur as well as multimodal transportation, walkability, livability, arts and culture, Nicollet Ave...the list goes on. This wide and deep involvement in the transparent and inclusive process yielded a terrific master plan. Thank you.

John Van Heel (110 W Grant St): I was the chair of the Loring Park Neighborhood Master Plan Steering Committee. You should move forward in making these changes, not just because the Loring Park Master Plan is now city policy, but because the policies the plan contains are fully consistent with the larger policies and goals of our city. In fact, I can proudly hold the neighborhood's plan up as a shining example of how to grow a community and increase density and how to pursue a more sustainable environment and how to preserve and cherish and historic buildings and landscapes. All of these are key parts of the City's comprehensive plan. Historians has identified 34 buildings in our neighborhood that are historically significant. Twenty of these 34 buildings are located on Loring Hill. This district makes up just one quarter of the neighborhood while the freeway surrounding downtown may seem to make anyplace within it fair game for the highest building heights possible, I think the nature of Loring Hill asks us to look deeper. The unique hillside setting on the opposite side of Loring Park sets it apart from anywhere else in the Loring neighborhood. The character of the hills mansion district is closer to the adjacent residential area to the south of the freeway where allowable heights are lower than anywhere in Loring Park, let alone the rest of downtown. Changing from the six story OR3 zoning to four story OR2 will not change the fact that the hill is already one of the most densely populated areas in the city, but it will help protect the remaining historic fabric that the community so cherishes. The changes in zoning to OR2 is appropriate zoning that aligns with city policy. It is appropriate that you support this change. Loring Hill is the only place in the entire neighborhood that the community intended to allow lower building heights. The B4N was created by the Planning Department in order to comply with city policy that says that the height of the downtown core should step down as it approaches adjacent neighborhoods. This zoning district has already been implemented in the north loop and parts of Loring Park. As you know, the Loring Park neighborhood was a cooperative project between the neighborhood and the city. The ten story height represented in the built form plan was the one height designation that was directly connected to a specific zoning district. That zoning district was the ten story B4N district. We thought were incorporating city policy. Did we think this zoning was restricting anything from being built higher? No. Because of Loring Pond and the shoreland overlay district, virtually every development in our neighborhood is required to go through a conditional use permit approval process. When the 36 story LPM tower was being developed on a parcel that was split zoned, it was the city that chose B4N zoning as the best the zoning for the development. The neighborhood master plan provides specific tools for Nicollet Ave and near downtown areas in order to assist developers seeking added height. We think B4N works under the plan, but if the city would like to defer action on near downtown areas but the Planning Department initially recommended for B4N zoning, I do not think a single resident or neighborhood business would have any issue whatsoever. However, Nicollet Ave south of Grant St is very different. It should be noted that neither the Convention Center nor Meet Minneapolis are requesting a deferral on zoning on this stretch of Nicollet Ave. This street is very important to the Loring Park neighborhood. The neighborhood does not cherish the current character of this low scale gap-toothed corridor. We want a place that we want to go to. The vision of the neighborhood is not that our stretch of Nicollet be an extension of downtown, it is also not that it should be an extension of the one and two story Eat Street that is found further south. The vision of the neighborhood is that Loring Village be its own unique destination that serves the neighborhood and the adjacent Convention Center. It is around this vision that the neighborhood

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embraced establishing an activity center. The staff report notes that the activity center was the topic of great debate. This seems to suggest that there was significant disagreement but there wasn't. If there was a debate it was not within the neighborhood but rather between the neighborhood and Council Member Goodman who opposed the activity center and who was opposed to increasing allowable height. I respect those views, but I do not think they represent the views of the Loring residents or Nicollet Ave businesses. There was an equal level of consensus across the whole neighborhood that we should protect Loring Hill and that we should encourage greater height, density and intensity of use on Nicollet Ave. Citizens for a Loring Park Community is supporting upzoning on Nicollet to C3A. While it does not match the full allowable height designated in the master plan, in other regards it is believed to be a good fit. Nightclubs have been a concern, however, the zoning study revealed that because of residential adjacencies they are not allowed. Nicollet business owners believe that it'd be good to have hotels as part of a future development mix and they are included as an allowable use under the plan. The staff report has an extensive section regarding potential dangers of development on Nicollet. I think they represent the same dangers that there are wherever development happens in the context of an existing city. Loring residents and Nicollet business owners are aware of these dangers, but they are even more aware of vacant streets that draw criminal activity. This presents a far bigger and more immediate threat. New development is not the only solution, but the neighborhood does believe that it is an important part. The neighborhood has struggled for 20 years to draw new development here. Developers will simply not take the risk given downtown area land crisis and given the current zoning. You should reject the reasons provided by the Planning Department for deferring action on Nicollet Ave south of Grant St. The Loring Park Master Plan is the most extensive community driven master plan in the city. Planning of the Convention Center and for the proposed Nicollet street car line have been fully considered and incorporated. Land use studies have already been conducted for the transit line. The notion that a tourism master plan or a downtown maintenance plan might trump an official city small area plan should not be accepted. There may be dangers in moving forward with rezoning but please consider carefully what you risk by deferring action. You risk seeing the current crime on Nicollet get worse. It's already a threat to the attractiveness and livability of the entire Loring Park neighborhood. This is also a threat to the Convention Center. By deferring action you risk the faith of the community which dedicated countless hours to the city to make it better only to see politics interfere. Growing our city and increasing density is the policy of the city and the Loring Park Master Plan. Growing our transportation corridor is something that residents can understand and get behind. When a supports this policy, you should support that neighborhood. I believe it is the city's duty under state law to implement a change in zoning. I hope you will support doing so.

Gary Simpson (301 Oak Grove): My wife and I have lived in our property for 16 months. Snapshots by newbies can offer a fresh perspective on what might otherwise be so obvious as to be overlooked. After considering numerous locations in both St Paul and Minneapolis, we settled on a condo on the Loring Hill for two reasons. The cityscape of Loring Park is second to none. Second, the abundant and rich social capital that radiates around and through the Loring Park neighborhood. The wellspring of this amazing social capital is the Citizen's for a Loring Park Community. Before buying our condo I researched this neighborhood organization and have intensified my research by becoming an active participant of CLPC, attending my first meeting in 2014 and being elected to the board and becoming its secretary not too long thereafter. I'm a researcher by profession. I teach neighborhood research methodologies and the practice of leadership at Luther Seminary and hold one of our chairs there. I've now had a look at the planning process that has gone into our Loring Park Master Plan and our Loring Park Neighborhood Rezoning Study. It's easily the gold standard of neighborhood participatory planning. I urge all of you during your deliberations to recognize this gold standard of participatory planning that has permeated our rezoning study. I urge you to recognize and respect the good faith and good will that radiates throughout our Loring Park Neighborhood Rezoning Study

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and to do nothing that injures or diminishes the precious social trust that this study represents and creates. Thank you.

John Kistler (300 Clifton Ave): When I bought my house a couple years ago and wanted to turn it into a bed and breakfast it didn't seem like the process was very common sensical at all. It was a very difficult process to go through. As a matter of fact, I was only able to do it because of the parameters that were set in the neighborhood master plan. It floundered in city meetings for a long period of time, through multiple owners until the neighborhood group stepped in and allowed us to start working on a bed and breakfast on Loring Hill. Many of you probably haven't heard of a lot of bed and breakfasts in Minneapolis and the reason why is they were inadvertently made illegal through the 50s and 60s through layers of laws that were set up to outlaw boarding houses. In the master plan, part of the focus of it was to try to allow to have a bed and breakfast district on Loring Hill. Earlier, someone said the only difference between OR3 and OR2, besides the height restriction, would be the institutions but that's not true. One of the big differences between OR2 and OR3 zoning is that in OR3 bed and breakfasts are not an acceptable use, they are only a conditional use. In OR2 they are an acceptable use. In order to have a bed and breakfast district you've got to have some character to the neighborhood. The OR2 zoning would also preserve that character in the district. That character in the district would be preserved by the OR2 zoning and in the individual mansions. Another difference between OR2 and OR3 is that in the OR2 you're allowed to have two residential units in a mansion. I wanted to have a single family residence and then allowed to have an out building be a second residence on the property. If it's in the OR3 zoning area then OR3 makes you cut the mansion up into three different apartments somehow, it's a minimum of three residential units you have to have in an OR3. The only reason I was allowed to have a bed and breakfast on the hill in a mansion is because it's on a national historic register. So, even with the change in zoning, it would be impossible for someone to turn any of those other mansions into a bed and breakfast because of these layers of laws. The master plan has recognized the possibility of having a hospitality zone on Loring Hill and recognized the vulnerability of Loring Hill to development. If Loring Hill is allowed to be developed willy nilly we're going to completely lose the character of the mansions and it's beyond just the mansions, there's 510 Groveland and two beautiful churches and then the Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance building there. All of those are very contiguous and create a very unique character in that neighborhood which can be changed dramatically by six story height restrictions and other uses that are forced on these mansions. There was tremendous foresight in the master plan in looking into hospitality in this way. A lot of people think of bed and breakfasts as an antiquated institution, but the sharing economy has revved up in the last couple of years with Uber, Lyft and AirBnB. We've talked about hotels around the Convention Center, but Air BnB has turned into the largest hotelier here in Minneapolis and it's the largest hotelier in the world. Air BnB is a venue for people to use houses and mansions to be able to bring visitors into Minneapolis. What better location than to showcase our unbelievable city through this little gem that we've got on Loring Hill? Our master plan is out in front when it comes to predicting a hospitality trend and promoting the Loring Park neighborhood as a site for historic tourism. Norman and I commend the plan and the foresight of this plan with regards to current trends in hospitality.

George Puzak (1780 Girard Ave S): I represent The Clifton, LLC, the owner of 322 Clifton Avenue, a 22-unit apartment building on Loring Hill built in 1964. When I purchased the property in 2004, I made a long-term investment in the neighborhood based on the property's OR-3 zoning, its views of Loring Park and Minneapolis skyline, and its transit-oriented location. I urge you to apply a city-wide perspective and the city's stated policy of increasing density. The city's land use policy is to add density near downtown core and along transit corridors. The Downtown Council's 2025 plan seeks to double downtown's residential population to 70,000 residents and add 15,000 housing units by 2025. Downzoning on Loring Hill conflicts with these adopted policies. Downzoning Loring Hill is unnecessary and overly broad. The Shoreland Overlay

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District already limits building heights on Loring Hill. Although staff report makes vague references to Loring Hill's character and charm, parcels tell a different story. Of 75 parcels on Loring Hill, only 20 are labeled "mansions." Fifty-five (73%) of the parcels are non-mansions and would be downzoned. Down zoning is an overly-broad penalty to protect 20 structures labeled mansions that that may or may not have any historic value. How many of those 20 are historic? I don't think staff answered that questions. Please acknowledge the elephants in the room. Three massive residential towers, each over 20 stories tall dominate Loring Hill. The Summit House Towers and Oak Grove Tower. Despite massive presence, towers are barely mentioned in staff report, rezoning study or built form plan. They Impact streetscape, buildings, and livability of entire hill, especially nearby properties. Even though towers only represent three parcels, the estimated 700 residents in these towers disproportionately influence the master plan and re-zoning process. Is it possible that tower residents and condo owners have a greater interest in preserving views from their personal residences? If residents genuinely care about Loring Hill's character, they can focus on the 20 mansions, rather than the 55 non-mansions. In closing, I urge you to reject the portion of the staff report that downzones Loring Hill. Even if you pass other parts of the study, I urge you to modify the Loring Hill section to focus on the 20 mansions. The impacts of downzoning all of Loring Hill are underestimated and require further study. I further ask that you remove the graphic titled "Built Form Plan" and that you obtain written consent from each property owner for any downzoning. Thank you.

Joseph Finley (1350 Nicollet Ave): I remember that stretch of Nicollet before the hotels were built and before the highrises were built. I've been involved with Citizens for a Loring Park Community since moving to our neighborhood. I'm currently chair of our livability committee. I'm concerned about our neighborhood safety and crime that impact our lives, particularly along Nicollet Ave. We have blight, empty liquor stores, the 1500 site on Nicollet which is a fire waiting to happen. Our Nicollet corridor within the Loring Park neighborhood has been dealing with a persistent street crime problem for three years. This is an area I consider a gateway to Nicollet Mall. This gateway is not very welcoming. I don't even recommend this area to visiting friends. This corridor needs revitalization. Why should we be building a new Nicollet Mall if the same conditions are going to exist? A change in zoning on the Nicollet corridor to C3A would motivate more development, more density, and increase business activity. It'd mean more pedestrians, more residents and more healthy businesses, increased revenue for the city. Please don't defer action. Thank you.

LaDonna Meinecke (430 Oak Grove): This plan adopts a sustainable growth model that promotes the development of more workforce housing by allowing an increase of building height from one to two stories to four to six stories with commercial on the first. Such development will improve the well-being for many Minneapolis residents, especially for modest and low wage workers. I am a board member for the Citizens for a Loring Park Community. I am a clinical social worker having practiced for over 30 years in mental health and I am proud member of SEIU Healthcare. I sit on the SEIU council. Currently, SEIU represents 1200 Minneapolis residents working in hospitals, nursing homes and clinics. We have 3600 homecare workers. I became a union activist because my values align with the mission of SEIU which is to improve the lives of working people. SEIU Healthcare knows that increased housing costs are a huge burden on Minneapolis workers. I recently moved back to Minneapolis from the suburbs, but I, along with some other empty nesters and retirees are the exception, not a trend. Too many of my fellow SEIU workers have been forced to move to the suburbs because they cannot afford to live in Minneapolis. The only effective way to reduce the cost of housing in Minneapolis is to increase the supply and allow for more housing to be built. That requires building up and denser construction. Height limits push up the cost of housing for all workers. SEIU supports expansive zoning to allow denser construction because that is the only way workers will be able to afford to live here. Without allowing growth and more housing, Loring Park will effectively deny workforce members residency here. Loring Hill, most of the housing there is for baby boomers like me so I'm really focusing on that area. SEIU has recently taken up the cause of climate justice. There is nothing more a city can do to

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reduce greenhouse gasses than to allow for walkable transit and family friendly communities. For this to happen, Minneapolis needs taller and denser buildings, not just single family dwellings as we see in a lot of the southern neighborhoods. When I first moved here, I was able to live in Minneapolis as a young worker because I was willing to live in a neighborhood deemed bad and the rent was cheap. I spent considerable time on Nicollet Ave from my work as a waitress at Butler Drug on Nicollet and 26th to downtown. Fast-forward 40 years to now and I am dumbfounded that as I frequent the Nicollet area from Grant St to the freeway, whether it's by car, bus or foot, I observe that it is as desolate and unsightly as it was when I first moved here years ago. Meanwhile, Eat Street and other downtown areas have become destination areas. There are a few small family business owners in the area who have poured most of their financial equity and their hearts to make a go of it on Nicollet south of Grant. They could really benefit from a zoning change that would expand their customer base, which could happen if there was increased housing density in the nearby area. When working people have to spend less on transportation and housing, they are able to better support local businesses. In turn, this increases the city's tax base. It's not only a moral imperative to support an increased workforce housing for modest and low wage workers, it's an economic no-brainer. In closing, I ask for your support for my board's master zoning plan recommendation for increased development of the activity center in Loring by lifting the height limit to four to six stories instead of just one and two. There needs to be development now. There is a city owned property called Meter Farm right across from Market Barbeque. The Loring community has previously tried to convert this to workforce housing. You have the opportunity to be on the right side of Minneapolis history when it comes to improving the well-being of working people and for small businesses by simultaneously reducing the carbon footprint. Thank you.

Paul Hinderager (410 Groveland Ave): I've lived on Lowry Hill East for over 30 years now. I support this rezoning study. I think Loring Park is the best and most densely developed neighborhood in Minneapolis and also the most diverse. Our housing stock offers everything from reasonably affordable rental housing to pricing condos and mansions. I'd like to dispel any testimony that there isn't affordable housing in Loring Park. It may not be as affordable as Stevens Square, but we have a lot stock of affordable housing in older brownstone buildings. The neighborhood would like to maintain that as part of our value system as having diversity in the neighborhood. We are one of the oldest residential neighborhoods in Minneapolis with many buildings of historical significance. While these buildings are located throughout Loring Park, a larger percentage of them are on Loring Hill. As you know, Loring Hill is actually part of Lowry Hill and would still be called that if it was not divided by the freeway. There are nine properties in Loring Park on the National Registry of Historic Places. Of these, two are on Loring Hill. Of the eight properties in Loring Park that have been given local historic designation, six of these are on Loring Hill. The Loring Park Neighborhood Master Plan identifies another eight properties of potential significance, including a house built during the Civil War and the building that is known as 510 Groveland. The 2008 Historic Resources survey conducted by Meade and Hunt, which was paid for by the city, identified another eight properties that were inventoried and recommended for intensive research. All eight of these properties are on Loring Hill. There are either 19 or 20 properties on the hill that are historically significant. This density of historic properties may not exist anywhere else in the city. It creates a unique character that we should try to preserve in an area that is only a fraction of the reach of the neighborhood master plan. Later, if someone asks why they should consider downzoning in this area when they didn't downzone in another area, I challenge them to provide the same criteria that we have just provided. Those of us that live in Loring Park welcome quality development and we have supported all but one of the properties developed in the past decade. We want good quality development, but we want development that enhances the neighborhood. Our vision for the neighborhood guides development on Loring Hill to create buildings with height and massing that will complement the many architectural treasures located here. We believe the proposed OR2 zoning will best serve this plan as four story buildings could blend in and enhance the mansions and other significant properties. It's not just the mansions we have to be concerned about, it's all these beautiful brownstones and old residential hotels

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too. They all contribute to the feeling of what is Loring Park. Loring Park is one of the few neighborhoods where you can walk down the street this close to the city and everyone knows everyone and there's a communal feeling that doesn't exist in other parts of the city. The Loring Park Master Plan includes the most extensive community outreach and involvement of any such plan. Throughout this process the only dissenting opinion to rezoning properties on Loring Hill has been Mr. Puzak. He has a legitimate right to do that because he has a vested interest and owns a property, however, the property is sandwiched between two historically designated houses and I would pose that the footprint of the property is not large enough to do the kind of development he's proposing. Thousands of volunteer hours, tens of thousands of dollars of NRP funding and involvement by more than 1000 residents over several years should be respected and valued. Please approve the OR2 zoning proposed for properties on Loring Hill to make this vision a reality. Thank you.

Tom Paul (1600 Hennepin Ave): I'm the chair of the Parish Council at the Basilica of St Mary. I'm here to speak on behalf of our parish. We've been actively involved in the Loring Park Master Plan process and in discussions around land use, height and density. We are requesting that the zoning of the Basilica of St Mary's parcels of land retain the OR3 zoning that is currently in place. Our parish has no plans for any changes to our properties, but we feel we needed to have a voice in protecting the OR3 designation that we have today. Given our location, there is no compelling rationale regarding use, height or density that would warrant downsizing these properties. We believe the current zoning of OR3 should be maintained and that it keeps us current and consistent with the properties that are adjacent to us. It is our request today that you not approve the recommendation to rezone the Basilica of St Mary parcels to OR2, but instead retain the current designation of OR3. We have previously visited with Beth Elliott about this request and have the support from the Citizen's for a Loring Park Community board. They approved a motion of support for the Basilica properties to retain the current status of OR3 zoning at their September 14 board meeting. Thank you.

Jana Metge (1645 Hennepin Ave S): I wanted to point out what while we were doing this intensive planning process, we also reviewed 14 different developments over the last eight years which resulted in 2549 housing units. If downtown is looking at 7000 housing units in a certain period of time, we are one of five neighborhoods, we are already at 2549. We look at all types of housing like affordable, supportive, workforce, luxury apartments, condos...we have covered the mix. We also dedicated \$1m to the Jeremiah Project and to Plymouth Church Foundation to create affordable housing units in the north end of the neighborhood by the Basilica. Earlier you heard testimony about the downtown district planning effort going on named Pathways to Places. We have been very much involved in this process. We have two people that sit on the community action committee. We worked with city and park staff to have boards at every event. We coordinated with the city and park to do extra meetings in Loring Park to make sure that we would help them with their community engagement. Our master plan documents have been the base for the framework that you're seeing come up. To see that the framework planning is used as a basis for deferring any zoning recommendation is an absolute shock to us. We also worked with the Convention Center, Meet Minneapolis, the Downtown Council, three Planning Directors and two CPED Directors through this planning process. They were all in support of our plan. They've been a part of our plan and have actively participated with our plan, specifically with the Convention Center. We met with Convention Center staff. We met with Convention Center staff and county staff on a proposed Convention Center hotel when the county was looking at the Century Plaza location. Century Plaza is a block outside of Loring Park, it's not even within the boundaries of the Loring Park neighborhood. We met with the County Commissioner on a proposed hotel for the Convention Center site and we met with the Convention Center staff on their master plan and learned that what they were proposing in their master plan is exactly what we had in our master plan for the area of Nicollet Ave and we're stunned that we had two separate processes going on, but we all were dead on with

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what we wanted to see happen on Nicollet Ave, without tourism and streetcars. I handed out the community engagement strategy that we used. You will see that with two of our Thursday night educational sessions we pulled in multijurisdictional speakers to talk about the streetcar. We have been very involved with this streetcar process as it developed and why we did the master plan so that we would have a land use plan and a framework that would propose density. We were told with the streetcar study that when we identified an activity center that it gave them extra points, whatever that means. We put a lot of work into this. We'd like to see this approved. Thanks.

President Brown closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Luepke-Pier: Beth, in listening to the testimony and reading the letters in the packet and the ones we just got tonight, it seems like a common message to support the downzoning on Lowry Hill and upzone Nicollet. The testimony says don't vote to defer voting on that portion, but when I'm looking through my packet, it seems as though what we have in our packet to vote on tonight doesn't show any changes to the Nicollet section.

Staff Elliott: Yes. What we had to supply to you was our recommendation for changes today. Logistically, we are doing one rezoning study right now. We have one map that we're requesting that you approve and one set of property addresses. We couldn't provide you with Phase I and Phase II recommendations because we don't know if the recommendations will be the same in the future for Phase II, but mainly because we as staff are proposing one set of zoning changes today.

Commissioner Luepke-Pier: So when we're voting tonight we're not voting at all on whether we're doing Phase I or Phase II of them together, we are only allowed to vote on Phase I?

Staff Elliott: You are allowed to change our recommendations.

Commissioner Luepke-Pier: Even though we don't have the recommendations for Phase II in front of us?

Staff Elliott: Right.

Commissioner Luepke-Pier: I feel a little uncertain doing that without that in front of me.

Staff Elliott: The rezoning study was for the whole neighborhood, these recommendations are for the whole neighborhood.

Commissioner Bender: What I'm understanding about the Phase II piece is that staff may bring back a recommendation for the zoning as originally proposed but with additional controls...some of the things I heard people talking about envisioning for that space, we actually don't have controls in place to require those. We might consider in the future strengthening our pedestrian overlay district or creating a new overlay district or creating stronger design guidelines. Are those the things staff is talking about? I wanted more clarity about what we might expect to come forward in the future for Phase II.

Staff Monson: Yes, there will be specific physical standards and street standards that would be adopted with the public realm framework how that would relate to how the development touches the public realm. This corridor is identified as a destination corridor which would be the highest intensity corridor. We would look to address the physical connectivity more purposefully with the Convention Center and probably create some

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sort of a framework plan related to that. It would guide future development of the Meter Farm and potentially other sites should they turnover for development.

Commissioner Rockwell: Just to clarify the thinking here on not rezoning that Nicollet stretch, the theory is that because it is currently zoned less than the proposed C3A we're sort of using our existing zoning as a little bit of a development moratorium on the theory that we can hold off on development that will have 30, 50, 70 year impacts on the area. Is that correct?

Staff Monson: That's correct, but I will note that the current zoning is not in conflict with an activity center. We have other activity centers with this zoning, including right across the river on East Hennepin which is a very thriving commercial area. For me, I like to look at the whole picture and be strategic over time. I don't think there is a difference in the quality of outcome desired. From my experience as a consultant to cities on specific issues like this, I think the right way to do this is to put a few more guidelines in place and we can call them design guidelines. I think that's the way to get the outcome we all want.

Commissioner Rockwell: It's developable now, it would be developable under C3A, what we're not talking about is the zoning, we're talking about the overlays. How does the imposition of those guidelines on the current zoning versus the proposed C3A zoning significantly differ?

Staff Monson: I think there's an opportunity cost. I think the true value of this corridor in particular is going to be realized once we have the public realm framework in place and the streetcar more down the path. It should have been further down the path by now and we can't really control that, it's more of a SHPO issue. Once we have that in place, the value of the parcels abutting Nicollet Ave will rise. There has been several discussions around this with multiple people involved. This is not a disagreement about the outcome that's desired, it's a disagreement about the steps to get there.

Commissioner Bender: I think we can work together with the folks who put so much time and thought into this to get something more out of the rezoning than we could if we just upzoned it. I think we've missed opportunities to do that in the past. There's no reason we shouldn't be looking at what could require of this development here that we really don't have the ability to do today. We have some site plan review requirements, but we don't have a lot of legal levers to make sure we're getting that vision that I know the community has put so much time into and I think a small amount of more time along with the expertise that we have now in the long range planning department will help us get to that better outcome. I'm supportive of this phased approach for that reason.

Commissioner Gisselman: Disregarding the downzoning of the Basilica, if we approved this with that exception, what concerns would staff have with that?

Staff Elliott: Can you clarify that a little?

Commissioner Gisselman: The representative from the parish suggested that they would prefer to preserve the current zoning as opposed to what's being recommended. If we adopt the recommendations from staff here today with the exception of that rezoning, what concerns would you have with that?

Staff Elliott: Without any plans yet for the Basilica, the main difference would be the height difference between six, which they have now, and four stories that is being proposed in the OR2. None of the functions and uses would be impacted by the rezoning. We don't have concerns.

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Commissioner Kronzer: What about St Mark's?

Staff Elliott: We wouldn't have concerns about St Mark's.

President Brown: A speaker referenced the Shoreland Overlay District as it relates to Loring Pond, it doesn't appear that there are any changes proposed to that as part of this rezoning study, but has there been discussions about eliminated that or are there any potential long term impacts we should be thinking of?

Staff Elliott: The area still has the Shoreland Overlay District so any property owner or developer who seeks to go above two and a half stories within that overly district will be applying for a CUP. We've had internal discussions about the value or lack thereof of this particular shoreland overlay but we are not proposing with this rezoning study to eliminate it. It seems like it needs to be a broader discussion about the shoreland overlay within the entire city.

Commissioner Gisselman: I move approval of the rezoning study and its recommendations with the exception of the parcels of the Basilica, maintaining their present zoning status which is OR3 (Magrino seconded).

Commissioner Kronzer: I'd like to also add that the St Mark's property maintains their OR3 zoning status as well (Magrino seconded).

Commissioner Luepke-Pier: In terms of the Phase II aspect of this, I wish we could have a timeline because I can see the need and benefit of how this would be a tool for the neighborhood to further realize their vision but I also know that when you're crafting a vision it seems like a long time to see anything realized. It'd be helpful to have something on the horizon. We've seen a lot of plans and rezoning studies over the years. The one thing I appreciate is when the neighborhood realizes it's part of a larger city and when a neighborhood comes forward and they recognize the assets they have and the value it brings to the city but also recognizes that they need to help us meet our larger goals of having a healthier, more sustainable city and tells us we recognize we need density and here's where we think we should put it. Thank you for recognizing there's a place for more people to move into your neighborhood and noting where you want that to be.

Commissioner Magrino: Is there a way to put a condition on the approval here that the Phase II part of this has to be wrapped up within a certain amount of time?

Staff Wittenberg: You can't condition the rezoning study on the timeline for future phases, but you can make a strong recommendation that would be considered by staff.

Commissioner Bender: I'm still concerned about the conflict that is created by the map in the small area plan and the zoning change to OR2. I'd like to include direction or recommendation that staff start a process of looking at that. I would look to staff to help me clarify how that action would be taken, but I would feel more comfortable with this if we were really relying on the zoning to control. Policy guidance is a little unclear.

Staff Elliott: I think what you're referring to is the built form plan in the adopted plan and its height, but I'm not certain what direction you're looking for.

Commissioner Bender: I'm suggesting that we, as a body, recommend revisiting that part of the small area plan.

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Staff Elliott: I think you're referring to the policy amendment. I think what you'd need to do is direct us to conduct a policy analysis and a potential amendment to the Loring Park Neighborhood Master Plan. It would need to go through its own community engagement process, its own planning process and maybe making reference to the built form plan would be helpful for us as staff.

Commissioner Luepke-Pier: I would not be in favor of moving it from OR2 to OR3. I feel like the point of the neighborhood's master plan was clear. I think the justification is very strong. This is a zoning articulation of their vision. It changes too much of the intent of what they did instead of honoring it.

Commissioner Bender: I was stating support for the OR2 zoning, however I'm expressing concern that because of what we've seen in the past with height being a very explicit piece of a small area plan, even though our zoning still allows for additional height through a conditional use permit process. I would suggest that we look at that particular piece of the small area plan again because now the zoning will reflect that desire to have a lower height as well as a higher threshold for increasing the height there. I move that we recommend that staff bring back their recommendations related to Phase II within 12 months, and that we also recommend that staff reopen the small area plan's policy guidance related to built form to reflect the decisions we're making in the zoning update. I appreciate all the work that has gone into this plan.

Aye: Bender, Forney, Gisselman, Kronzer, Luepke-Pier, Magrino, Rockwell and Slack.

Absent: Gagnon