

Minneapolis City Planning Department Report Rezoning Study

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Focus of Study: Zoning along and in the vicinity of West Broadway between Girard Avenue and the city limits

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Wards: 3, 4, 5

Neighborhood/Community Organizations:

- Northside Residents Redevelopment Council (NRRC)
- Jordan Area Community Council (JACC)
- West Broadway Area Coalition (WBAC)
- West Broadway Business Association (WBBA)

Background

From 1997 to 2001, the public was given the opportunity to participate in three distinct visioning exercises that focused on the desired future of the West Broadway corridor. Because it is the near-term intent of Hennepin County to repave West Broadway from Girard Avenue to the city limits, the two most recent exercises focused on this section of the street. The result of this work is documented in two reports. *Strategic Redevelopment Initiatives: Blueprint for Implementation of West Broadway Area Comprehensive Vision* was completed in 1997. It identifies some area-specific development objectives on the way to recommending an organizational structure and process that would support a sustained redevelopment effort. *West Broadway Road Repaving Recommendations* (2001) goes somewhat beyond what is suggested by its title. It is a companion to and by-product of the community charrette (2000) that focused on the Penn-Broadway node. It includes suggested urban design principles, and recommendations for physical street and other public realm improvements. It divides West Broadway between Girard and the city limits into four segments—The Gateway, Penn-Broadway, The Curve, and the Irving Avenue Business District. A related map, *West Broadway: Community Sponsored Urban Design and Identification of Development Opportunities*, (attached) was produced by the consultant that documents objectives by street section, and identifies development opportunity sites.

The impetus of the zoning study was the observation on the part of the community that certain identified goals are not supported by existing zoning. The rezoning study was also in response to development proposals that were seen not to be in keeping with the existing character of

development along West Broadway. It was hoped that zoning regulations might play a role in enforcing compatible design. A moratorium on commercial and industrial development was put in place in November, 2000, in order to protect this rezoning study. It is still in effect and is scheduled to expire on November 22, 2002.

As a first step in developing proposed zoning for the West Broadway area, Planning staff distilled the place-specific development objectives in the above-referenced documents in the attached map entitled *West Broadway Rezoning Study: Principles Based on Recent Community-based Visioning*. The identified "principles" served as the core objectives that underlay the development of proposed rezoning.

Rezoning Themes

Colored maps are attached to Planning Commission packets for their review. They portray existing zoning and proposed zoning for the various street sections. Others wishing to review the maps can do so on the Minneapolis Planning Department website. Click on "West Broadway Revitalization."

Residential Density. There is broad agreement that increasing residential development along West Broadway would be a good thing. The additional buying power strengthens existing businesses. New residents have an investment in the safety of the street and add eyes on the street at times when some businesses are closed. The good transit service on Broadway is an asset to new households and is in turn supported by them.

Support for additional residential development is evidenced in a number of proposed zoning changes. Several blocks of parcels along the north side of The Curve are proposed to be rezoned from commercial to R5 Multiple-Family District, as is a block of parcels on the south side of The Curve.

Parcels in The Gateway segment of West Broadway are platted to the north-south avenues, rather than toward West Broadway. This is also the area that is designated as community corridor rather than commercial corridor. Most parcels within 20 feet of West Broadway along The Gateway segment of West Broadway are proposed to be rezoned from R1A, R2B, or OR1, to R4 Multiple-Family District.

There are a number of the parcels in The Curve and the Irving Avenue Business District sections of West Broadway that do not front on West Broadway and are zoned either R3 or R5. The proposal utilizes the R4 Multiple-Family District for this category of off-Broadway parcels properties to improve zoning consistency.

Design/pedestrian protection at Penn-Broadway. The commercial area along West Broadway in the vicinity of the Penn-Broadway neighborhood commercial node is proposed to be rezoned to the PO Pedestrian Oriented Overlay District. This is to respond to community concerns about adverse, incompatible development in the area, as well as cultivate a walk-able pedestrian oriented business area at the node.

Existing development at the intersection is consistent in building placement, with buildings at or near the front property lines on three corners of the intersection. There are numerous

multi-story buildings. The proposed PO District would require that redevelopment of the fourth corner is respectful of this context. Similar considerations pertain to the several other redevelopment opportunities that exist in the Penn-Broadway area. The PO District also codifies an intent to support a set of commercial uses that reap benefits from close proximity to other pedestrian oriented businesses, and a public realm design that makes it comfortable for people to move from one business to the next.

The Penn-Broadway area is designated a Neighborhood Commercial Node in The Minneapolis Plan.

Support commercial reinvestment where appropriate. At Penn-Broadway and the Irving Avenue Business District, existing C2 zoning is generally preserved where parcels are large, or where residentially zoned properties are not immediately adjacent. Where these C2 parcels are in the proposed PO Overlay District, certain uses such as automobile services and drive through facilities would not be allowed. The C2 zoning is still important because C1 zoning limits the maximum floor area of a business to between 4000 and 8000 square feet. Again, the intent is to support appropriate reinvestment on the Avenue.

Downzoning C2 to C1. Some commercial property is proposed to be rezoned from C2 to C1. Most instances of this occur along The Gateway and The Curve sections of West Broadway. These sections are seen as distinct from the other two because they are less intensively commercial, and the policy intent is to support and intensify the residential character of these street sections. In these street sections, C2-zoned parcels are generally proposed to be downzoned to C1 where this does not result in the creation of a nonconforming use.

Creation of nonconforming uses avoided. The proposed zoning is very respectful of existing uses. In only a single instance, at 1808 West Broadway, would a proposed change in the base zoning make an existing conforming use nonconforming. This commercially zoned site, located along The Curve segment of West Broadway, has recently been utilized for a very small convenience/grocery store. It is the lone commercial site on the north side of the street for several blocks. It is flanked on both sides by a block or more of residential buildings on property proposed to be rezoned to R5. In the view of staff these R5 zoned residential blocks are the best opportunity for residential redevelopment on West Broadway. If 1808 West Broadway is rezoned to R5 with the adoption of this proposed zoning plan, the property could continue to be operated as a legally nonconforming grocery store indefinitely.

IL Industrial Living Overlay District. Prestige Products is an existing light industrial manufacturing operation at 1401 West Broadway. It is located in a large and distinctive two story building, and is currently zoned C2. Reinvestment into the existing building appears to be most likely if it continues to be utilized as a light industrial facility. For this reason, the parcel's proposed zoning is I1 Light Industrial District.

The property is also proposed to be added to the Industrial Living Overlay District. This allows creative reuse options in the future such as artist lofts, or live-work units.

Zoning

A table showing existing and proposed zoning for all affected parcels is attached.

Community Input

Planning staff worked closely with the Design Committee of the West Broadway Area Coalition (WBAC), and scheduled formal presentations to the WBAC Board and all other established community organizations in the area. These included Northside Residents Redevelopment Council (NRRC), Jordan Area Community Council (JACC), and West Broadway Business Association (WBBA). While none of the community organizations took a formal action in support or opposition to the proposed zoning plan, there seems to be broad agreement on the types of changes being proposed.

In addition to these meetings, all affected property owners were notified by mail about the specific zoning change that is proposed for their parcel, and invited to an evening meeting to learn more and discuss any concerns they might have. No significant concerns were raised at this meeting. Some concerns are being raised recently concerning the use of the PO Pedestrian Oriented Overlay District in the Penn-Broadway area. These concerns will be aired and discussed at a October 17 meeting of the WBBA. Staff has received one letter (attached) expressing opposition to the zoning changes on the 2900 block of Washburn Avenue.

Analysis

The following findings are required by the Minneapolis Zoning Code. They are principally oriented toward the review of the proposed rezoning of a limited number of parcels associated with a specific development proposal. Their use in this report facilitates consideration of the validity of the above-discussed themes in a more structured manner.

1. Whether the amendment is consistent with the applicable policies of the comprehensive plan.

The subject portion of West Broadway has three designations in The Minneapolis Plan (TMP). Part of it is designated a community corridor and part is designated a commercial corridor. The Minneapolis Plan is internally inconsistent with respect to where the transition between these designations occurs. See the related report that proposes to rectify this problem by modifying the TMP. The Penn-Broadway area is designated a Neighborhood Commercial Node.

TMP policies related to commercial and community corridors, and neighborhood commercial nodes, support additional development in general and housing growth specifically—while also emphasizing the importance of development that is compatible with surrounding areas. They highlight the importance of high quality design with buildings fronting on the street, ground level windows, and multi-story facades that provide visual interest.

The following policies are excerpted because they are particularly relevant. The proposed zoning plan is highly compatible with these objectives.

4.1 Minneapolis will encourage reinvestment along major urban corridors as a way of promoting growth in all neighborhoods.

Implementation Steps

Develop standards based on a recognition of the qualities that make urban corridors desirable, viable and distinctly urban, including; diversity of activity, safety for pedestrians, access to desirable goods and amenities, attractive streetscape elements, density and variety of uses to encourage walking, and architectural elements which add interest at the scale of the pedestrian.

- 4.2 Minneapolis will coordinate land use and transportation planning on designated Community Corridors streets through attention to the mix and intensity of land uses, the pedestrian character and residential livability of the streets, and the type of transit service provided on these streets.**

Implementation Steps

Strengthen the residential character of Community Corridors by developing appropriate housing types that represent variety and a range of affordability levels.

Promote more intensive residential development along these corridors where appropriate.

Require that street design for these corridors preserves and enhances the strong residential character and pedestrian orientation of these streets while maintaining the street's capacity to carry current volumes of traffic.

Support the continued presence of small scale retail sales and commercial services along Community Corridors.

Ensure that commercial uses do not negatively impact nearby residential areas.

- 4.3 Minneapolis will support development in Commercial Corridors where it enhances the street's character, improves its ability to accommodate automobile traffic and foster pedestrian movement, and expands the range of goods and services offered.**

Implementation Steps

Support a mix of uses on Commercial Corridors--such as retail sales, office, institutional, higher density residential (including Major Housing Sites where designated), and clean low-impact light industrial--where compatible with the existing and desired character of the street.

Ensure that commercial uses do not negatively impact nearby residential areas.

Regulate impacts of commercial uses, and in some cases prevent some uses from locating on designated Commercial Corridors, due to their adverse impacts on the viability of nearby residential areas.

Develop plans for the City's major Commercial Corridors which articulate the desired character of the street.

Develop parking facilities and management strategies that balance the following goals: improved customer access, protection of sidewalk traffic; reduced visual impacts and shared use of parking facilities.

- 4.4 Minneapolis will continue to provide a wide range of goods and services for city residents, to promote employment opportunities, to encourage the use and adaptive reuse of existing commercial buildings, and to maintain and improve compatibility with surrounding areas.**

Implementation Steps

Encourage the economic vitality of the city's commercial districts while maintaining compatibility with the surrounding areas.

- 4.5 Minneapolis will identify Neighborhood Commercial Nodes that provide a shopping environment of small scale retail sales and commercial services and are compatible with adjacent residential areas.**

Implementation Steps

Support the continued presence of small scale retail sales and commercial services in Neighborhood Commercial Nodes.

Direct other uses that act as neighborhood focal points (institutional, cultural or social) to locate at Neighborhood Commercial Nodes.

Restrict auto-oriented, industrial or manufacturing activities that generate significant vehicular traffic, noise or air-borne impacts on residential neighbors.

Promote medium density residential development around Neighborhood Commercial Nodes (see also Community Corridors policy in this chapter).

Limit the territorial expansion of Neighborhood Commercial Nodes, but encourage rehabilitation and reinvestment in existing buildings.

Ensure that commercial uses do not negatively impact nearby residential areas.

Facilitate the redevelopment of underutilized commercial areas and promote their reuse as infill development, such as office or housing, while maintaining neighborhood compatibility.

Promote traditional urban form in terms of building siting and massing when undertaking new development in Neighborhood Commercial Nodes. (See discussion of traditional urban form in Chapter 9.)

Preserve traditional commercial storefronts at Neighborhood Commercial Nodes wherever possible.

Develop parking facilities and management strategies that balance the following goals: improved customer access, protection of sidewalk traffic; reduced visual impacts, mitigated impacts on neighboring uses and shared use of parking facilities.

8.2 Minneapolis recognizes that most city streets continue to be places where people live and work, and secondarily function as methods of moving vehicles; reconciling inherent conflicts will require collaboration and compromise among stakeholders.

Implementation Steps

New developments will be required to consider their relationship to the street through the site review process.

8.7 Minneapolis will direct its share of regional growth to areas well served by transit, to existing and potential growth centers and along transit corridors.

Implementation Steps

Require that all major new developments located within the city facilitate transit access and service.

9.5 Minneapolis will support the development of residential dwellings of appropriate form and density.

Implementation Steps

Promote the development of well designed moderate density residential dwellings adjacent to one or more of the following land use features: Growth Centers, Commercial Corridors, Community Corridors and Activity Centers.

Expand the understanding of the role that urban density plays in improving business markets, increasing the feasibility of urban transit systems and encouraging the development of pedestrian-oriented services and open spaces.

9.8 Minneapolis will maintain and strengthen the character of the city's various residential areas.

Implementation Steps

Ensure that city grants and programs are targeted to housing development or rehabilitation that reflects the traditional architectural character of residential areas.

Infill development standards must reflect the setbacks, orientation, pattern, materials, height and scale of surrounding one and two family dwellings.

Create traditional setbacks, orientations, pattern, height and scale of dwellings in areas where no clear architectural pattern exists.

9.11 Minneapolis will support urban design standards that emphasize a traditional urban form in commercial areas.

Implementation Steps

Enhance unique characteristics of the city's commercial districts by encouraging appropriate building forms and designs, historic preservation objectives, site plans that enhance the pedestrian environment, and by maintaining high quality public spaces and infrastructure.

Identify commercial areas in the city that reflect traditional urban form and develop appropriate standards and preservation objectives for these areas.

Orient new buildings to the street to foster safe and successful commercial nodes and corridors.

2. Whether the amendment is in the public interest and is not solely for the interest of a single property owner.

The proposed zoning amendments are designed to support community objectives identified over the past several years.

Staff is aware of a number of development proposals in the study area that are in early stages. In these instances, staff was conscious to propose zoning modifications that have merit independent of the potential future development, and that are consistent with the proposed zoning of similar parcels. It is possible that certain anticipated developments will require further rezoning of one or more parcels. Property owners have standing to make such application for rezoning, and doing so as part of a set of project-specific development applications provides ample context for reconsideration of the zoning of the parcel(s).

3. Whether the existing uses of property and the zoning classification of property within the general area of the property in question are compatible with the proposed zoning classification, where the amendment is to change the zoning classification of particular property.

Where property is proposed to be rezoned to the Multiple-Family Residential District, the distinction between proposed-R4 and proposed-R5 in many cases reflects a sensitivity to the parcel's relationship to adjacent properties.

At the Penn-Broadway and Irving Avenue Business District street sections, the extent of the commercial districts are generally not expanding. Along Penn Avenue near West Broadway, there are a few instances where the zoning is proposed to change from residential to OR2 High Density Office Residence District. These parcels are all across the street from commercially zoned properties.

4. Whether there are reasonable uses of the property in question permitted under the existing zoning classification, where the amendment is to change the zoning classification of particular property.

The amendments would change the zoning of multiple parcels. In general, properties can be utilized under their existing zoning district.

5. Whether there has been a change in the character or trend of development in the general area of the property in question, which has taken place since such property was placed in its present zoning classification, where the amendment is to change the zoning classification of particular property.

Commercial and Office Residence properties were all given their present zoning in 1999 when commercial and industrial zoning across the city was modified in a comprehensive manner. In many cases this was simply a translation from a B-based (B2S, B3S, B3C) zoning classification system to a quite different C-based system (C1, C2, C3S, etc). Because of the general sense that the City's commercial districts were over-zoned, a number of commercial and industrial parcels were downzoned where that did not result in the creation of a nonconformity. The character of the area has changed little since 1999. What has changed is that the community has defined a vision for the future of West Broadway. This rezoning study was conducted in support of that vision.

Recommendation of the City Planning Department:

That the City Planning Commission adopts the above findings and recommends **approval** of the proposed modifications to the official zoning maps in the city's Zoning Code as detailed in the attached maps and table.