



Northwest District Association

Board of Directors
2015-2016

Planning and Sustainability Commission

RE: Comments on the Mixed Use Zones Project Proposed Draft

The Planning Committee of the NWDA has been reviewing the changes to the commercial zoning in the neighborhood as recommended in the Mixed Use Zones Project Proposed Draft and we offer the following comments.

First, we want to thank Planning staff for listening to our comments on the Discussion Draft and making several changes that we support. We appreciate that the Proposed Draft has removed the Main Street designation from the streetcar streets. Equally we agree that height & FAR bonuses are not appropriate in the Alphabet Historic District and that the bonuses in the proposed mixed use zones are now restricted to affordable housing and commercial. The changes in support of retaining jobs in the Eastern Edge of the district by moving some of the EX to EG1 is important.

However, we still have several concerns.

1. There are inconsistencies between and the proposed MUZ and the policies, plans and codes adopted by City Council for our neighborhood. Extensive local planning has been done in our neighborhood and prior to the adoption of this new code, the NW Plan District code must be revisited to identify conflicting language and changes need to be made to reconcile the Plan District code to the new code.
2. In the SE section of the neighborhood the Historic District Guidelines and NW District Plan support retaining the low scale residential development and legacy employment that has been there for decades. CM3 zoning is not appropriate there. Staff has identified some of this area as more appropriate for EG1 designation. We think there may be more areas currently used as light industrial or other employment uses in which that zoning is appropriate. Also, the remaining properties around the EG1 in this area of the neighborhood should also not be CM3 but CM2, a scale more compatible to the employment uses and low scale residential. We request that property in this area be zoned either EG1 or CM2 depending on its current pattern.
3. The MUZ project is proposing to make all CS and CM in the neighborhood CM2. The current zoning along the Thurman Corridor has been a mix of CM and CS to encourage more finely grained development as described in the NW District Plan. If it is all CM2 we lose that granularity which is what makes the area unique and enables a transition to a smaller scale of development in an area that is currently more low scale residential than commercial or mixed use. To retain this mix, the CM zones should be rezoned CM1. Both CM1 and CM2 in this area should also have a design overlay.
4. The NW Plan District code specifies height overlays and bonuses targeted for specific areas to encourage housing, including affordable housing over more intense office development. The MUZ has bonuses that are allowed in all MUZ areas outside the Historic District. This inconsistency in the existing and proposed bonuses need to be evaluated for their appropriateness in the NW Plan District and changes made to the NW Plan District code to resolve them.

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5. While we support that the only bonuses proposed in the MUZ is for affordable housing and commercial, we feel that the affordable housing bonus as written will produce the amount of affordable housing for the bonus given. We encourage a system of graduated bonuses that would create housing affordable to a wider range of persons and families. In addition, while in-lieu fees make sense in some conditions, they must be substantial to avoid simply creating a fund to provide affordable housing in other neighborhoods. We want in-lieu fees to stay in the neighborhood they come from.

6. The development standards that are proposed in the MUZ may work well in Corridors but in some cases do not fit well in our district. For example, in some areas step-backs on all four sides may be appropriate. We will need to look more carefully at the development standards to determine where we have issues.

7. We support the requirement of a Transportation Impact Review for Mixed Use projects but are concerned that simply annual reporting is not enough. In areas such as NW, code that ties TDM performance to the ability to restrict parking passes should be included.

There is a lot of work to do to coordinate the proposed MUZ with the NW Plan District, the Historic District Guidelines, and our NW District Plan and we request Planning staff to work with us on resolving these issues before this code is finally adopted.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John Bradley".

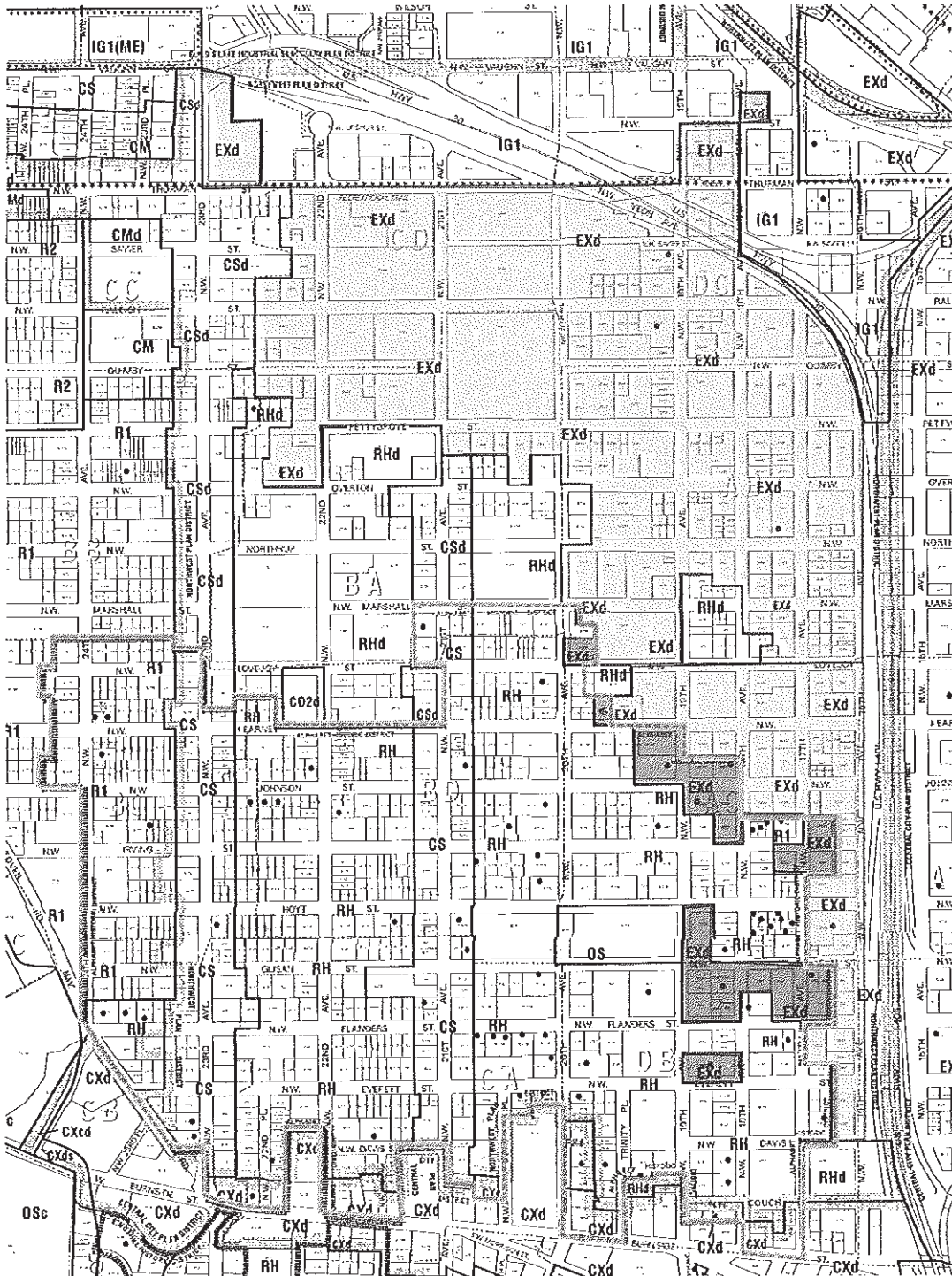
John Bradley, Chair

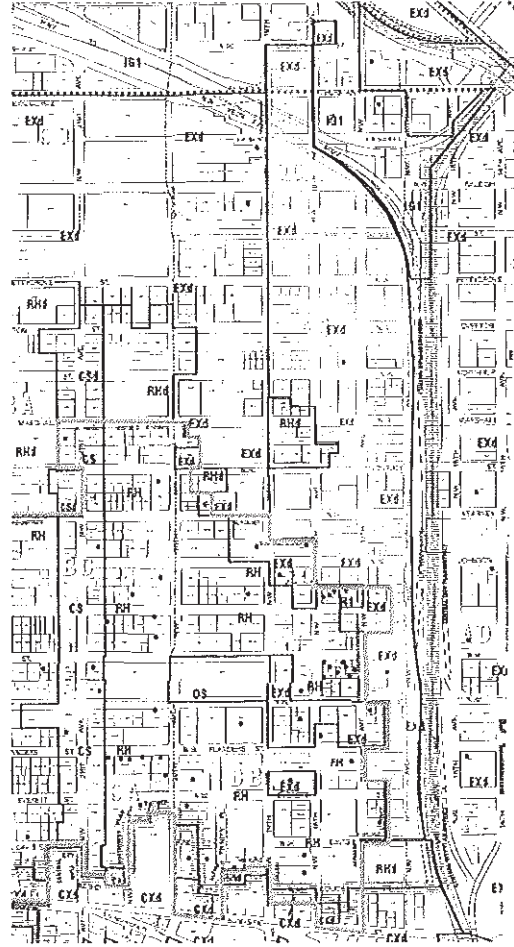
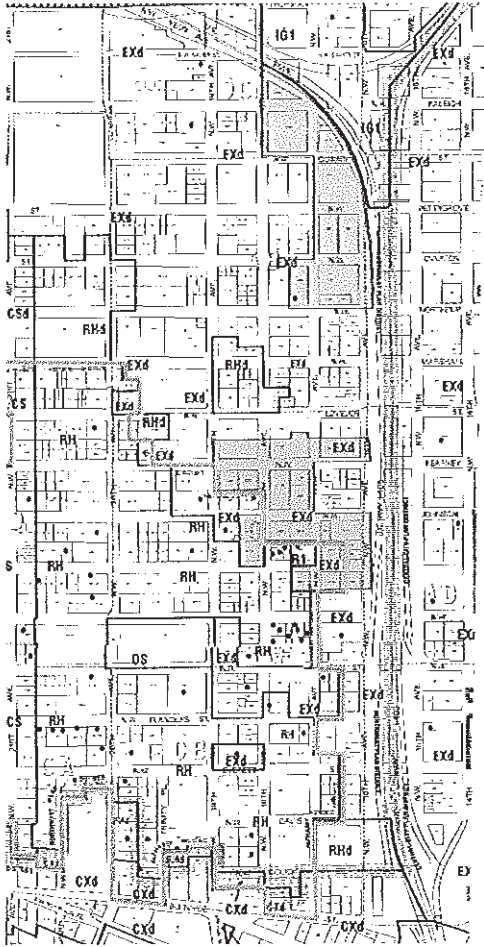
Northwest District Association Planning Committee

NW DISTRICT – Areas in Blue proposed CM3

Dark Blue Outline is Alphabet Historic District

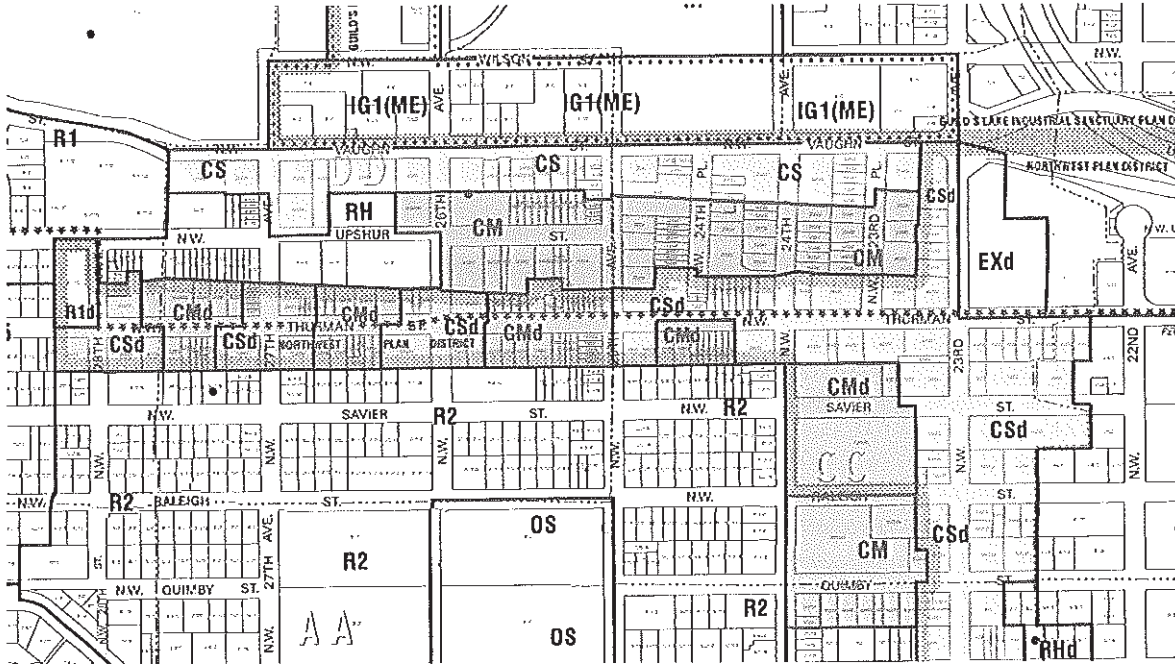
Areas in Grey proposed CM3 in Alphabet District





Areas in Green – Staff proposed EG1

Areas in Yellow – NWDA request not CM3



Areas in Green proposed as CM2 – NWDA requests CM1

Areas in Purple proposed as CM2 – NWDA OK with CM2