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**LAND USE APPLICATION SUMMARY**

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*Property Location:* 625, 629, 641, 643, 649, 653, 655, 659, 705, 711, 715, 719, 723, 727, 733, 737, 741, 747, 751 Van Buren St NE, and 901 Summer St NE

*Project Name:* Van Buren Street Northeast Comprehensive Plan Amendment

*Prepared By:* Rattana Sengsoulichanh, Senior City Planner, (612) 673-5046

*Applicant:* Sarah Walbridge-Jones

*Project Contact:* Sarah Walbridge-Jones

*Request:* To amend the built form designation and map in the comprehensive plan, *Minneapolis 2040*.

*Required Applications:*

<b>Comprehensive Plan Amendment</b>	To amend the built form guidance in <i>Minneapolis 2040</i> for the properties located at 625, 629, 641, 643, 649, 653, 655, 659, 705, 711, 715, 719, 723, 727, 733, 737, 741, 747, 751 Van Buren St NE, and 901 Summer St NE from Corridor 6 to Interior 3.
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**SITE DATA**

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<b>Existing Zoning</b>	R1A Multiple-Family District BFC6 Corridor 6 Built Form Overlay District
<b>Lot Area</b>	98,517 square feet / 2.26 acres
<b>Ward(s)</b>	Ward 3
<b>Neighborhood(s)</b>	St. Anthony East
<b>Future Land Use</b>	Urban Neighborhood
<b>Goods and Services Corridor</b>	Central Ave NE (one block east) and Broadway St NE (one block north)
<b>Built Form</b>	Corridor 6

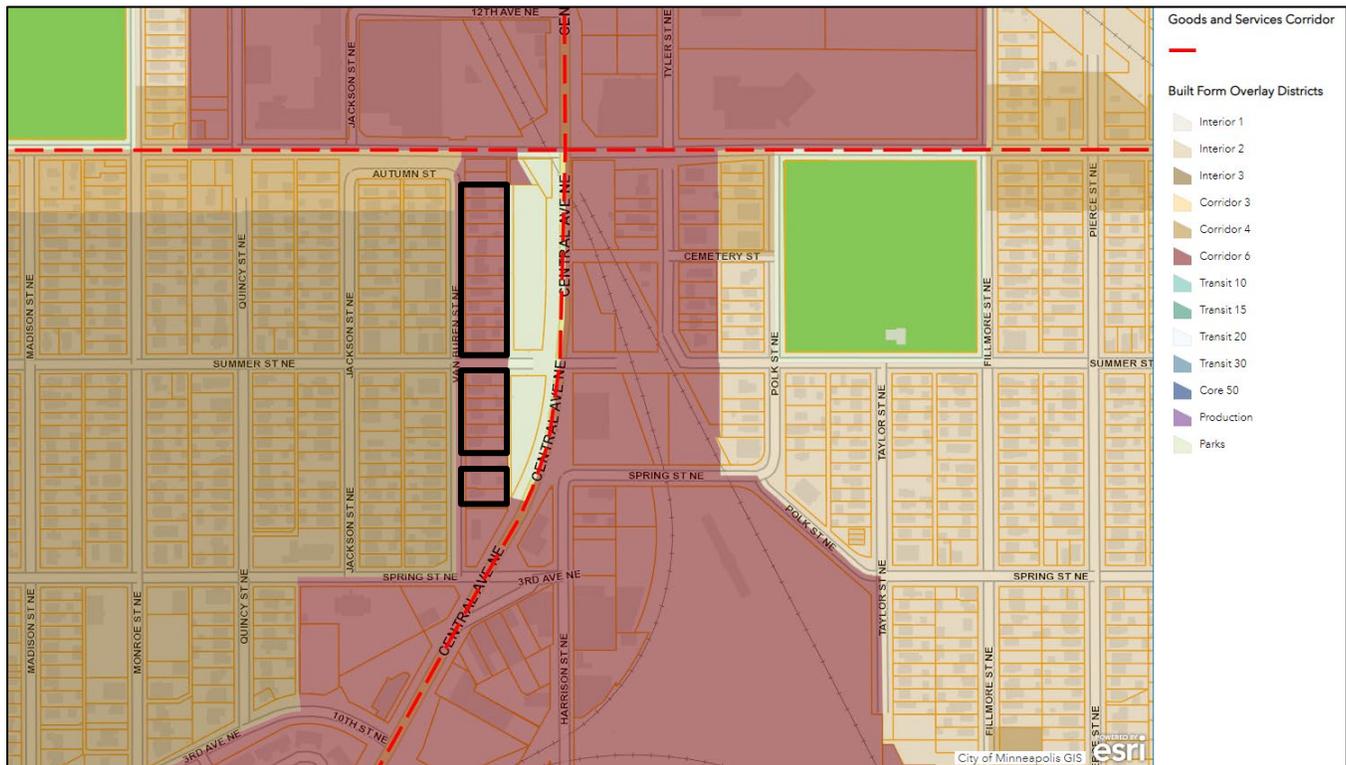
Date Application Deemed Complete	October 4, 2022	Date Extension Letter Sent	November 16, 2022
End of 60-Day Decision Period	December 3, 2022	End of 120-Day Decision Period	February 1, 2023

**BACKGROUND**

**SITE DESCRIPTION AND PRESENT USE.** The subject properties include 20 parcels with the following land uses:

- 625, 629, 641, 649, 653, 659, 705, 711, 715, 719, 723, 727, 733, 737, 741, 747, 751 Van Buren St NE, and 901 Summer St NE - single-family dwelling
- 643 and 655 Van Buren St NE - two-family dwelling

**SURROUNDING PROPERTIES AND NEIGHBORHOOD.** The properties are located on Van Buren St NE, primarily a residential street, ½ block from Central Ave NE. In the vicinity includes a mix of commercial, light industrial, and transportation related uses including the BNSF rail corridor, which is shared with the Northstar Line, a Metro Transit commuter rail service between downtown Minneapolis and the northwest suburbs.



**PROJECT DESCRIPTION.** The applicant is seeking to amend the comprehensive plan’s built form designation for the properties located at 625, 629, 641, 643, 649, 653, 655, 659, 705, 711, 715, 719, 723, 727, 733, 737, 741, 747, 751 Van Buren St NE, and 901 Summer St NE from Corridor 6 to Interior 3. The applicant is not seeking to change the designated future land use categories of the comprehensive plan. No development is proposed as part of this amendment.

The *Minneapolis 2040* comprehensive plan became effective on January 1, 2020. The future land use guidance for the sites is Urban Neighborhood. The built form designation is Corridor 6. The Corridor 6 district is typically applied along high-frequency routes as well as in areas near METRO stations.

Further, the properties are zoned BFC6 Corridor 6 Built Form Overlay; this district requires structures that are a minimum height of two stories and allows building heights up to six stories. The applicant has applied to amend the built form district from Corridor 6 to Interior 3. The Interior 3 district is typically applied in parts of the city closest to downtown, in the areas between transit routes. It is also applied adjacent to select corridors and near METRO stations, serving as a transition to lower intensity residential uses.

Typically, a comprehensive plan amendment initiated by property owners would have an associated development plan that would be followed with an application to rezoning the properties. While there is no proposed development in this case, property owners can still apply for comprehensive plan amendments to their properties.

A land use application to rezone all affected properties to the Interior 3 Built Form Overlay district is required if the amendment is approved. It is the responsibility of the applicants to submit the required rezoning applications.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS.** Like any planning effort, stakeholder outreach and participation are essential to create stronger communities. The adoption of *Minneapolis 2040* reflects the result of over three years of engagement with the people of Minneapolis, including over 150 meetings and conversations with thousands of residents, business owners, and community members. Therefore, comprehensive plan amendments require public outreach and engagement to raise awareness about the proposed application and actively prepare stakeholders to engage and provide feedback on the application. A copy of the applicant’s Engagement Plan, a summary of the outreach and engagement process, and letters of support was submitted with this application and is attached to this report.

Any additional correspondence received prior to the public meeting will be forwarded to the Planning Commission for consideration.

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## ANALYSIS

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### COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development has analyzed the application a comprehensive plan amendment to amend the built form guidance in *Minneapolis 2040* from Corridor 6 to Interior 3 for the properties located at 625, 629, 641, 643, 649, 653, 655, 659, 705, 711, 715, 719, 723, 727, 733, 737, 741, 747, 751 Van Buren St NE, and 901 Summer St NE based on the following findings:

1. *The extent to which the proposed change would be consistent with the comprehensive plan goals and associated policies.*

The proposed comprehensive plan amendment would be consistent with the applicable guidance, goals and policies of *Minneapolis 2040 (2020)*:

Future Land Use	Guidance	Staff Comment
<p><b>Urban Neighborhood</b></p> <p><i>(Existing and proposed)</i></p>	<p>Urban Neighborhood is a predominantly residential area with a range of allowed building types. May include small-scale institutional and semi-public uses (for example, schools, community centers, religious institutions, public safety facilities, etc.) scattered throughout. Like the Neighborhood Mixed Use category, commercial uses can continue serving their existing commercial function. Commercial zoning is appropriate for these properties, while expansion of commercial uses and zoning into surrounding areas is not encouraged.</p>	<p>All the subject properties in this application are designated Urban Neighborhood. The Urban Neighborhood designation supports a variety of uses, including residential. This designation is not requested to be changed.</p>

Goods and Services Corridor	Guidance	Staff Comment
<p><b>Central Ave NE – ½ block east of subject properties and Broadway St NE – within ½ block north of subject properties</b></p>	<p>Goods and Services Corridors serve two purposes: 1) To indicate where commercial uses should front in relation to properties guided for commercial future land uses, and 2) In addition to the guidance for the mixed-use land use categories found in this section, Goods and Services Corridors identify where the establishment or expansion of commercial uses can be considered. Properties immediately adjacent to a Goods and Services Corridor may be considered for commercial activity, allowing for uses similar in scale and scope to the Neighborhood and Corridor Mixed Use categories.</p>	<p>While the subject properties are not located directly on the Goods and Services Corridor, these policies support greater densities of nearby properties. This designation is not requested to be changed.</p>
Built Form Guidance	Guidance	Staff Comment
<p><b>Corridor 6 (Existing)</b></p>	<p>New and remodeled buildings in the Corridor 6 district should reflect a variety of building types on both moderate and large sized lots. Building heights should be 2 to 6 stories. Building heights should be at least 2 stories in order to best take advantage of the access to transit, jobs, and goods and services provided by the Corridor 6 district. Requests to exceed 6 stories will be evaluated on the basis of whether or not a taller building is a reasonable means for further achieving Comprehensive Plan goals.</p>	<p>Corridor 6 classification allows for a range of density of buildings. Existing buildings on the subject properties range from 1 to 2.5 stories. No development is proposed on these properties at this time.</p>
<p><b>Interior 3 (Proposed)</b></p>	<p>New and remodeled buildings in the Interior 3 district should reflect a variety of building types on both small and moderate-sized lots, including on combined lots. Building heights should be 1 to 3 stories.</p>	<p>The Interior 3 classification matches the scale of existing buildings on these properties. The proposed designation allows for multi-family housing with maximum building heights of 3 stories.</p>

The following goals from *Minneapolis 2040 (2020)* apply to this proposal:

**Goal 3. Affordable and accessible housing: In 2040, all Minneapolis residents will be able to afford and access quality housing throughout the city.**

To address issues of affordable and accessible housing, *Minneapolis 2040* intends to expand opportunities to increase the housing supply in a way that meets changing needs and desires. This means allowing more

housing options, especially in areas that lack choice and areas with access to frequent and fast transit, employment, and goods and services.

**Goal 1. Eliminate disparities: In 2040, Minneapolis will see all communities fully thrive regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, country of origin, religion, or zip code having eliminated deep-rooted disparities in wealth, opportunity, housing, safety, and health.**

To achieve the goal of eliminating disparities, the City of Minneapolis will work to undo the legacy that remains from racially discriminatory housing policies by increasing access to opportunity through a greater diversity of housing types, especially in areas that lack housing options as a result of discriminatory housing policy.

The following policies and action steps from *Minneapolis 2040 (2020)* apply to this proposal:

**Policy 1: Access to Housing: Increase the supply of housing and its diversity of location and types.**

- c. Allow multifamily housing on public transit routes, with higher densities along high-frequency routes and near METRO stations.
- d. In neighborhood interiors that contain a mix of housing types from single family homes to apartments, allow new housing within that existing range.

**Policy 4: Access to Commercial Goods and Services: Improve access to goods and services via walking, biking and transit.**

- e. Allow for increased housing supply within and adjacent to Commercial areas.

**Policy 80: Development Near METRO Stations: Support development and public realm improvements near existing and planned METRO stations that result in walkable districts for living, working, shopping, and recreating.**

- a. Allow and encourage a dense mix of housing, employment, and commercial goods and services near METRO stations.
- c. Require a minimum level of development near METRO stations to ensure that land is used efficiently near major transit investments.
- d. Ensure that METRO stations are accessible via sidewalks and bicycle facilities including those with mobility challenges.
- k. Make strategic investments around individual stations that create safe high-quality, walkable districts for living, working, shopping, and recreating for people of all ages and incomes.

The mapping of the built form and future land use categories to corridors and parcels in Minneapolis 2040 is based on a number of factors. The first four policies of Minneapolis 2040 are the main influences on the maps - Access to Housing, Employment, Commercial Goods and Services, and Production and Processing. Access to parks, schools, and other similar amenities were also considered when applying different designations. Right-of-way width was also considered. To the extent feasible, corridors with similar conditions throughout the city were given similar guidance.

The subject parcels are one-half block west of Central Avenue, a designated Goods and Services Corridor with existing high frequency transit service between downtown Minneapolis and Columbia Heights, and is part of the corridor for the future planned METRO F Line bus rapid transit (BRT).

In general, major corridors with high frequency transit are mapped with the Corridor 6 built form district, transitioning to lower intensity built form districts on the half-block off of the corridor, such as Corridor 4,

Corridor 3 or Interior 3. Other corridors with high-frequency transit were mapped Corridor 4, transitioning to Interior 3 or Corridor 3. In this case, the Parks built form district was applied along properties fronting on Central Avenue NE, to reflect the existing open space land use, and Corridor 6 was applied on the half-block transitioning to the neighborhood along Van Buren St NE.

These lots are located one-half block off Central Ave NE, and yet still received a Corridor 6 designation. While not originally considered, other factors that contribute to the existing physical conditions are that these blocks are separated from Central Avenue NE by a viaduct over the nearby rail corridor, and a narrower right-of-way along Van Buren St NE than the typical corridor mapped with Corridor 6. These conditions combined create a unique circumstance that is not generally applicable along major corridors that support the lower-intensity Interior 3 built form district.

However, along Van Buren, near the Spring St intersection, these conditions become less applicable. Corridor 6 is appropriate for 635 Van Buren (not part of this application). 613-23 Van Buren (not part of this application) does not have the above noted conditions and therefore, Interior 3 would not be appropriate for this site.

- Evidence demonstrating the reason(s) that the plan should be changed, including but not limited to whether new information has become available since the comprehensive plan was adopted that supports reexamination of the plan, or that existing or proposed development offer new opportunities or constraints that were not previously considered.*

In 2014, the City Council adopted the *St. Anthony East Neighborhood Small Area Plan*, a planning process commissioned by the Saint Anthony East Neighborhood Association (SAENA) to guide future land use and development in the neighborhood. As part of this process, the proposed Nicollet-Central modern streetcar was taken under consideration with proposed stations at the intersections of Central Ave NE-Spring St NE and Central Ave NE-Broadway St NE to inform land use guidance and the neighborhood's relationship to the Central Ave corridor. Along with adoption of the small area plan were conditions such that it would be used to guide future preparation of the city's update to the comprehensive plan, and that recommendations in the small area plan are to be reevaluated and adjusted as part of the update.

In 2020, the City Council adopted *Minneapolis 2040*, the city's updated comprehensive plan. Per the policies identified above, and considering the other comprehensive plan goals and policies, the built form map introduced Corridor 6 to parcels nearest to Central Ave NE, after the open space, and applied Interior 3 as a transition for properties further into the neighborhood.

The neighborhood is flanked by two regional streets to its north and east, Broadway St NE and Central Ave NE respectively, which were raised over the rail corridor on a viaduct. The presence of these viaducts and the volumes of traffic necessitated the closing of local street connections to these corridors at the approaches of the bridges. As a result of these transportation infrastructures, the northernmost parcel of the subject properties has an elevation difference of a minimum of two stories from Van Buren St NE to the street level of Central Ave NE. When approaching Summer St NE, south along Van Buren St NE, the difference in elevation of the parcels to the street level of Central Ave NE is greatly reduced. The existing condition of this infrastructure was not previously considered as part of the update to the comprehensive plan and application of the built form designation.

- The relationship of the proposed amendment to the supply and demand for particular land uses within the city and the immediate vicinity of the site.*

In the last 12 months, two multi-family residential development projects immediately adjacent to the subject properties were granted land use approvals. These properties are located near the Central and Spring Street intersection where the unique conditions of this area are less applicable. They include a four-story, multi-family residential proposal containing 23 units and a six-story, multi-family residential project with 64 units.

The construction of these projects demonstrates that there is a demand for housing within the city and in the immediate vicinity of the site.

While no development project is proposed as part of this amendment, the Interior 3 district would allow an increase in the supply of housing beyond the existing housing that is available across these properties. The Interior 3 district is typically applied in parts of the city closest to downtown, in the areas in between transit routes. It is also applied adjacent to select corridors and near METRO stations, serving as a transition to lower intensity residential areas.

4. *A demonstration that the proposed amendment has merit beyond the interests of the applicant.*

The amendment to the Interior 3 district will benefit the city and the community. The subject parcels are located one-half block west of Central Ave NE, a major transit corridor, and directly fronts Van Buren St NE. It allows for the area to serve as a transition space to the lower density residential to the west while still allowing for increased density beyond what the current zoning allows and further achieves the comprehensive plan goals.

5. *The possible impacts of the amendment on all specific elements of the comprehensive plan as may be applicable, including but not limited to:*

*(a) Land use and built form;*

The subject properties are located one-half block from Central Ave NE and within a block of Broadway St NE, which are both Goods and Services Corridor. Central Ave NE is a high frequency transit corridor that is served by the Route 10 bus and the future METRO F Line, a planned bus rapid transit (BRT) line. While the subject properties are not located directly on the Goods and Services Corridor, these policies support greater densities of nearby properties. The current built form designation of Corridor 6 supports building heights up to 6 stories with minimum heights of two stories to ensure that the land around transit station areas (Central Ave NE and Spring St NE, and Central Ave NE and Broadway St NE) properly utilizes land around proposed major transit investments.

Typically, on a corridor generally mapped with Corridor 6 along the fronting lots, the half-block off the corridor would be Corridor 4 or Interior 3 to serve as a transition. These blocks are separated from Central Avenue NE by a viaduct over the nearby rail corridor with a fairly significant grade change. In addition, the Van Buren St NE right-of-way is narrower, at 60 feet, compared with the typical corridors mapped with Corridor 6. The right-of-way widths of Central Ave NE in the area ranging from 80 to 120 feet. These conditions combined create a unique circumstance that is not generally applicable along major corridors and that instead support the lower-intensity Interior 3 built form district.

The proposed amendment to Interior 3 would still allow multi-family housing with building heights of a maximum of three stories and no minimum height requirement.

*(b) Transportation;*

The subject properties are located one-half block from Central Ave NE and within a block of Broadway St NE, which are both Goods and Services Corridors. Central Ave NE is a high frequency transit corridor that is served by the Route 10 bus and the future METRO F Line a planned bus rapid transit (BRT) line.

These parcels are located along Van Buren St NE in the St. Anthony East neighborhood and in proximity to varying modes of local and regional transportation infrastructure. This includes Central Ave NE - a Minnesota Trunk Highway (MN 65), Broadway St NE - a Hennepin County Road (County Road 81), and a rail corridor (BNSF Railway Company). The BNSF rail corridor is used for freight, and shares it with the Northstar Line, an intercity passenger rail service between downtown Minneapolis and the northwest suburbs.

The rail corridor transverses southeast to northwest under the Central Ave NE and Broadway St NE intersection, which resulted in a network of viaducts to facilitate pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular crossings over the railroad. As a result of these transportation infrastructures, the northernmost parcel of the subject properties has an elevation difference of a minimum of two stories from Van Buren St NE to the street level of Central Ave NE. When approaching Summer St NE, south along Van Buren St NE, the difference in elevation of the parcels to the street level of Central Ave NE is greatly reduced.

While an existing stairwell facilitates a vertical connection from the street level of Van Buren St NE to the top of the viaduct at the southwest corner of Central Ave NE and Broadway St NE, the existing stairs are not ADA compliant. The first point of access south of this stairwell, along Central Ave NE, is via the sidewalk along Summer St NE.

The prevalence and increase in automobile traffic have also informed vehicular access and circulation in the neighborhood. According to visual evidence from the Minnesota Historical Aerial Photographs Online, aerial images taken as recent as 1957 showed streets connecting Quincy St NE and Jackson St NE from the St. Anthony East Neighborhood north onto Broadway St NE, and from Summer St NE to Central Ave NE and allowing for vehicular access.

While policy supports dense development near METRO transit station, the difference in elevations of the street along Van Buren St, notably for the properties north of Summer St NE, and the lack of a traditional street grid in accessing these properties were not considered when applying the Corridor 6 designation.

*(c) Housing, including the extent to which the proposal contributes to the City's adopted housing goals;*

Existing housing on these properties include a mix of single-family detached dwellings and duplexes which range from 1 to 2.5 stories that are renter and owner-occupied. The amendment to Interior 3 allows for growth including multi-family dwellings with buildings heights up to three stories in support of the city's housing goals.

*(d) Economic competitiveness;*

While the proposed amendment does not directly affect economic competitiveness, the proposed amendment will allow increased housing density near transit service including the future METRO stations that allows people to conduct daily activities without using a car.

*(e) Environmental systems;*

Not applicable.

*(f) Public health;*

Not applicable.

*(g) Heritage preservation;*

Not applicable.

*(h) Arts and culture;*

Not applicable.

*(i) Parks and open space;*

Not applicable.

*(j) Public services and facilities; and*

Not applicable.

(k) *Technology and innovation.*

Not applicable.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

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The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) recommends that the City Planning Commission and City Council adopt staff findings for the application by Sarah Walbridge-Jones for the properties located at 625, 629, 641, 643, 649, 653, 655, 659, 705, 711, 715, 719, 723, 727, 733, 737, 741, 747, 751 Van Buren St NE, and 901 Summer St NE:

**A. Comprehensive Plan Amendment.**

Recommended motion: The City Planning Commission recommends that the City Council **approve** the comprehensive plan amendment to amend the built form guidance and map in *Minneapolis 2040*, for the properties located at 625, 629, 641, 643, 649, 653, 655, 659, 705, 711, 715, 719, 723, 727, 733, 737, 741, 747, 751 Van Buren St NE, and 901 Summer St NE from Corridor 6 to Interior 3.

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## ATTACHMENTS

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1. Oblique aerial photo
2. Built Form map
3. Written description and findings submitted by applicant
4. Community Engagement Plan, Feedback and Outcomes
5. Letters of support
6. Public comments