

MEMORANDUM

To: City Planning Commission, Committee of the Whole
Prepared By: Peter Crandall, Senior City Planner, (612) 673-2247
Date: October 6, 2022
Subject: 2725 University Ave SE
Request: A new, seven-story mixed-use building with 140 dwelling units and 3,200 square feet of commercial space.

SITE DATA

Existing Zoning	C3A Community Activity Center District PO Pedestrian Oriented Overlay District UA University Area Overlay District BFT30 Transit 30 Built Form Overlay District
Lot Area	37,560 square feet / .86 acres
Ward(s)	Ward 2
Neighborhood(s)	Prospect Park
Future Land Use	Community Mixed Use
Goods and Services Corridor	University Avenue SE
Built Form	Transit 30

SITE DESCRIPTION

The site is located along the University Avenue SE Goods and Services corridor and is a through-lot with additional frontage along 4th Street SE. The site is located adjacent to the Green Line LRT and within ½ mile of two LRT transit stations. Additionally, the site is located within ½ mile of the University of Minnesota East Bank campus.

The site is currently occupied by a one story commercial building with a surface parking lot. Sites immediately adjacent on the same block contain a four-story office building and a one-story federal post office building. The site is currently zoned for the C3A Community Activity Center District with the Transit 30 Built Form Overlay District and the Pedestrian Oriented and University Area Overlay Districts.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant is proposing to demolish the existing structure on the site and to construct a new seven-story mixed use building with 140 dwelling units and approximately 3,200 square feet of commercial space. The project would include two levels of structured parking, one below grade and one at grade accessed via one curb cut along 4th Street SE. The small commercial space would be located along the University Avenue SE Goods and Services Corridor, as would the principal entrance and lobby space for the residential use.

APPLICATIONS

Based on staff's preliminary review, the following land use applications have been identified:

1. **Variance** to the minimum height requirements for the Transit 30 District. The minimum height is 10 stories, and the applicant is proposing a seven-story building.
2. **Variance** to reduce the minimum west interior side yard from 15 feet to 2 feet.
3. **Variance** to reduce the minimum east interior side yard from 15 feet to 2 feet.
4. **Variance** to reduce the minimum established front yard along 4th Street SE from 15 feet to 0 feet.
5. **Site Plan Review**

Additional applications may be required, depending on the plans that the applicant formally submits.

APPLICABLE POLICIES

The following policies from the comprehensive plan, *Minneapolis 2040* (2020), apply to future development on this site:

Future Land Use	Guidance	Staff Comment
Community Mixed Use	Large-scale mixed use development is encouraged throughout these areas, with commercial uses fronting on major streets. Commercial retail spaces are typically smaller in order to generate pedestrian activity, and are often a destination for customers coming from outside of the market area. Active uses that are accessible to the general public such as office, food service, retail, or medical establishments are required at the street level; therefore single-use residential development is not permitted. Contiguous expansion of commercial zoning is allowed.	The proposed project would comply with the requirements of the Community Mixed Use land use category. The land use designation supports large-scale mixed use projects with commercial uses fronting along Goods and Services Corridors.
Goods and Services Corridor	Guidance	Staff Comment
University Avenue SE	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	The proposed project would comply with the guidance for the University Avenue SE Goods and Services Corridor. The project is proposing to locate the 3,200 square feet of commercial space along the designated corridor. The property is already zoned for commercial uses.

	to the Neighborhood and Corridor Mixed Use categories.	
Built Form	Guidance	Staff Comment
Transit 30	New and remodeled buildings in the Transit 30 district should reflect a variety of building types on both moderate and large sized lots. Upper floors of taller buildings should be set back to increase access to light and air. Building heights should be 10 to 30 stories. Building heights should be at least 10 stories in order to best take advantage of the access to transit, jobs, and goods and services provided by the Transit 30 district. Requests to exceed 30 stories will be evaluated on the basis of whether or not a taller building is a reasonable means for further achieving Comprehensive Plan goals.	The proposed project would not comply with the requirements of the Transit 30 Built Form District or the Transit 30 Built Form Overlay zoning district. The minimum height requirement for this district is 10 stories. The applicant is proposing a 7-story structure. The project would comply with the minimum and maximum FAR requirements.

FEEDBACK REQUESTED

Staff is requesting feedback on the following items:

1. Feedback is requested on the yard variances and the potential practical difficulty associated with implementing a large-scale project on this site with reflective yards.
2. Feedback is requested on the minimum height variance. Staff does not see a practical difficulty unique to this site that would justify a variance to the minimum height that is not financially based. Staff is not supportive of granting a variance to the minimum height.



2725 University Avenue SE
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project is a 7-story, mixed used building located in the Prospect Park neighborhood of Minneapolis on an interior lot reaching from University Avenue in the southwest to SE 4th Street in the northeast. Currently, the site is occupied by a one-story restaurant building and a large surface parking lot. The proposed project would introduce 140 apartments (ranging from studios to 5 bedrooms) located over a commercial space of about 3200 sf and two levels of enclosed parking. The Future Land Use map designates this parcel as Community Mixed Use and identifies University Avenue SE as a Goods and Services corridor. The Built Form District calls out this site as Transit 30.

In response to these designations, and taking into account the Prospect Park Design standards, the project proposes a building that intensifies the uses along a commercial corridor while enhancing the public realm. The site fronts both University Avenue and 4th Street. The design of the building addresses both streets, providing active uses and enhanced landscaping on both

corridors. The University Avenue side will have a commercial space with a recessed colonnade to allow for a mix of outdoor and semi outdoor spaces for the future tenant. The amenity lobby is framed by a large two-story space that orients the most public uses of the building out to the street. The 4th Street side is also fronted by a secondary lobby and lines the garage keeping parking within and below the structure.

The proposed 7-story height of the building is similar in scale to many of the existing and recent developments completed on this corridor. The hotels directly across the street were recently completed at five and seven stories. The apartments across 4th Avenue rise between five and six stories. Taller buildings recently approved or constructed in the Stadium Village transit area are all on larger, corner or full block sites.

ZONING SUMMARY

Site Address	
2725 University Avenue SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414	
Developers	
North Bay Companies DG Equities LLC	
Zoning Recap	
2040 Land Use:	Community Mixed Use
2040 Built Form:	BFT30, Built Form Transit 30
Primary Zoning:	C3A
Overlay Zoning:	UA, University Overlay PO, Pedestrian Overlay
Site	
Total Area:	37,356 SF (0.85 acres)
Building Footprint:	34,896 SF

FAR	
Allowed FAR (Transit 30):	3 Min. - 10.4 Max
Proposed New Construction:	202,929 SF (5.43 FAR)

Height	
Allowed Height (Transit 30):	10 Stories Min. 30 Stories Max.
Proposed New Construction:	7 Stories

Required Applications	
- Minimum height variance from 10 stories to 7 stories	
- Side Yard Variance from 15'-0" to 2'-0"	
- Front Yard Variance from 15'-0" to 0'-0 for the first 25'-0" of the property on SE 4th Street	
- Site Plan Review	
Parcels: 3002923130049	

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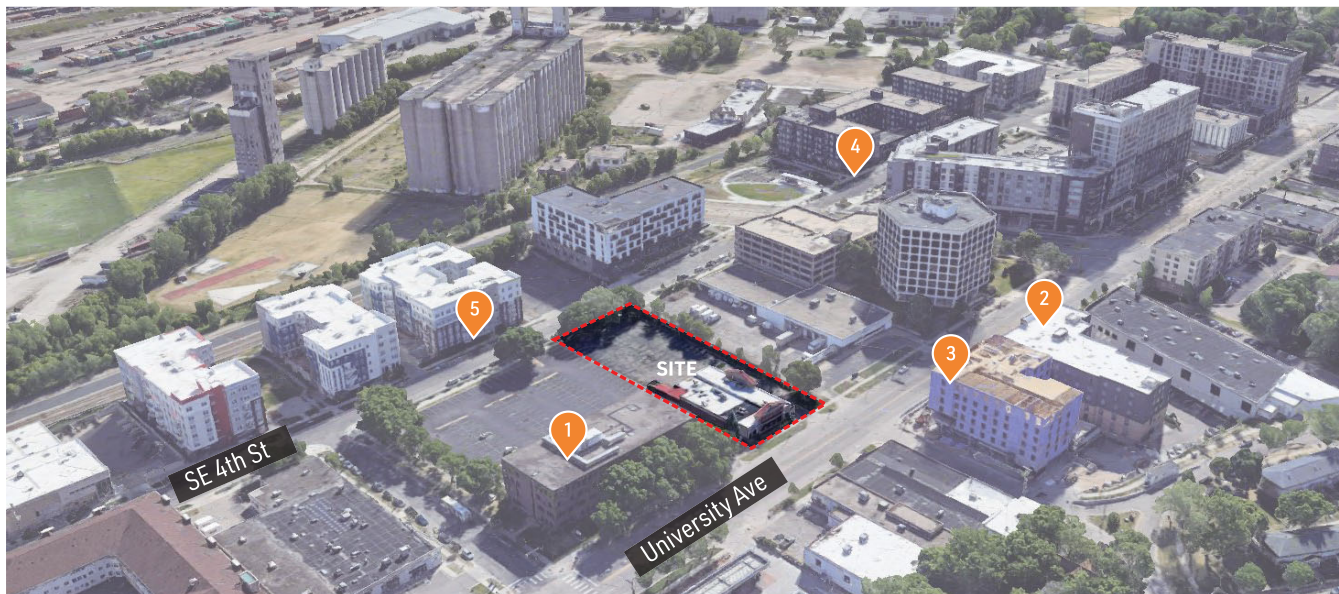
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2725 University
Avenue SE

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22-094.00

Project Recap

A.1



Surrounding Context

UNIVERSITY AVENUE EXISTING CONTEXT



1- Commercial Corridor on University Ave



2- Recently Completed Buildings Across University Ave



3- Streetscape along University Ave

SE 4TH STREET EXISTING CONTEXT



4- Residential building along SE 4th St



5- Residential building along 4th St

CHARACTER MEDIATED

The proposed site is characterized by two very distinct faces, a commercial elevation along University Avenue and a residential elevation along SE 4th Street. University Avenue is designated as a Goods and Services corridor and has many commercial uses. Existing users in the immediate vicinity range from a 4-story office building directly to the West, a one-story post-office building to the East, a couple of recently completed 5 and 7 story hotels across University Avenue, and additional one-story commercial buildings on the south side of University. SE 4th Street has a more residential character. Buildings along this street are typically 6 stories with residential lobbies and walk out units facing the street. Recently completed projects on 4th Avenue include (3) buildings at 44 North (6 stories each), HERE Minneapolis (6 stories), Green on 4th (6 stories), The Louis (5 stories), The Link (7 stories on 4th Ave, 11 stories on University), and the Pillars (6 stories on 4th Ave, 10 stories on University.) The proposed project fits in scale with the surrounding context.

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Context

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Proposed Site



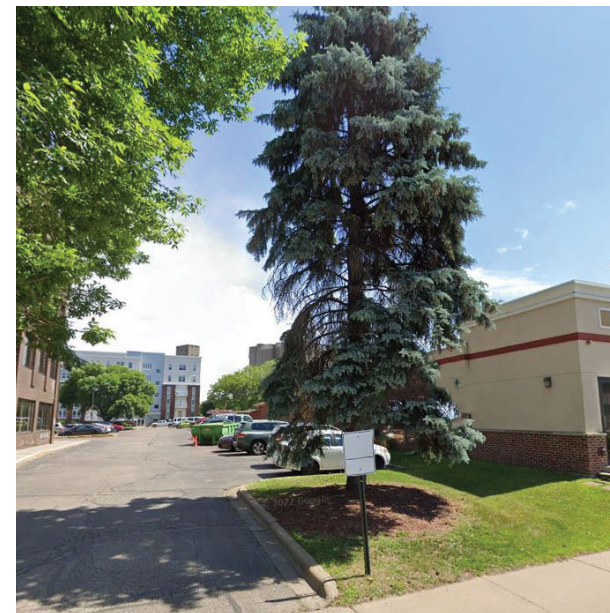
1- Front Elevation



2- View from Parking Lot



3- View from Parking Lot



4- Between Buildings

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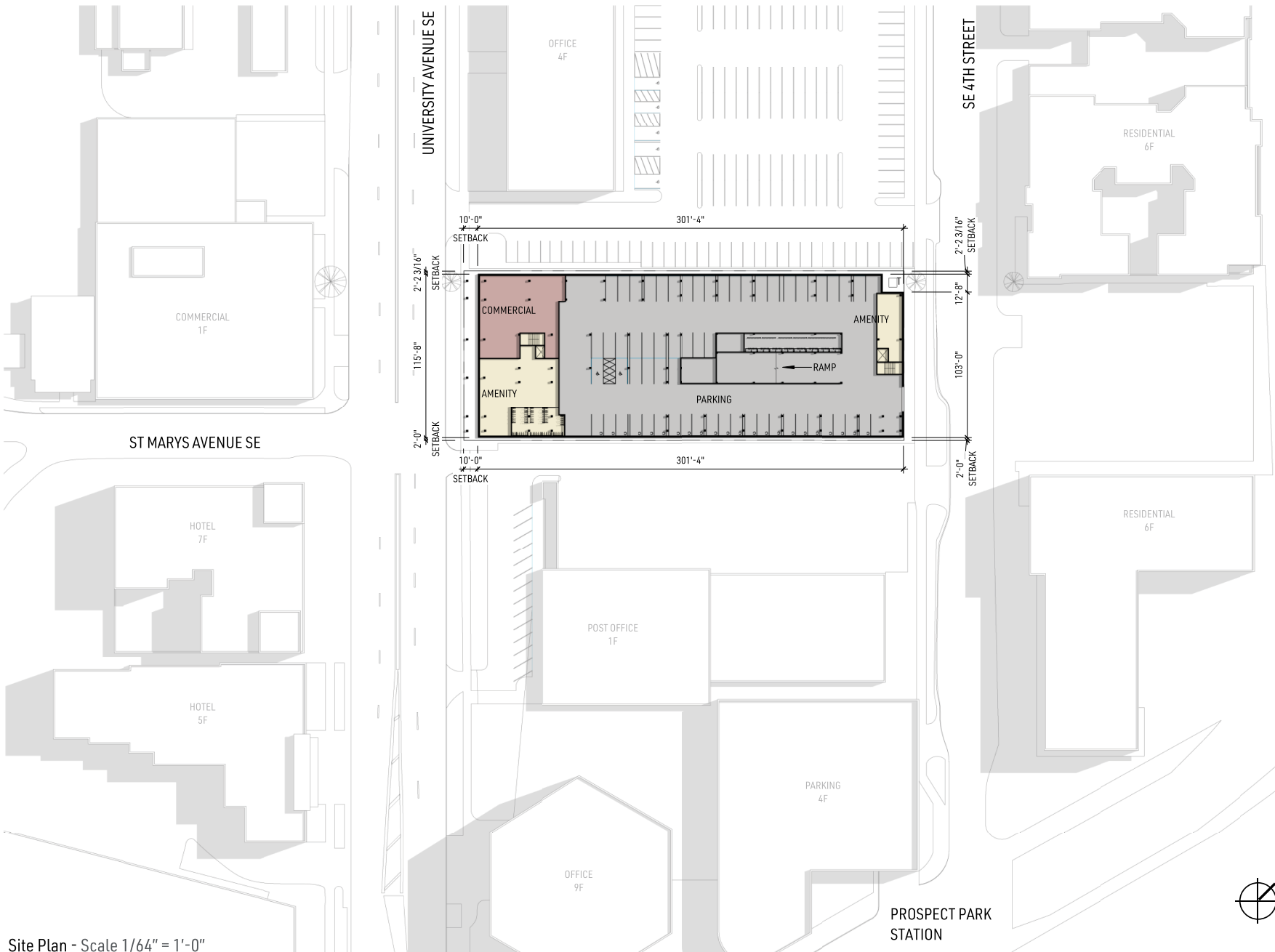
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Site & Context

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Site Plan - Scale 1/64" = 1'-0"

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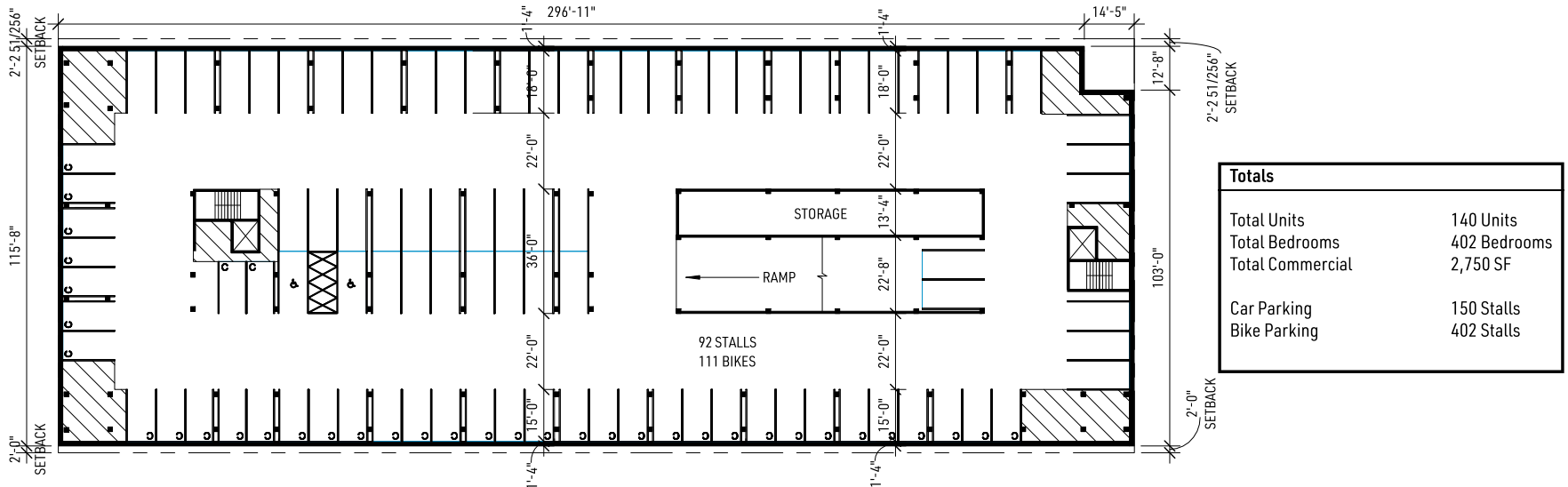
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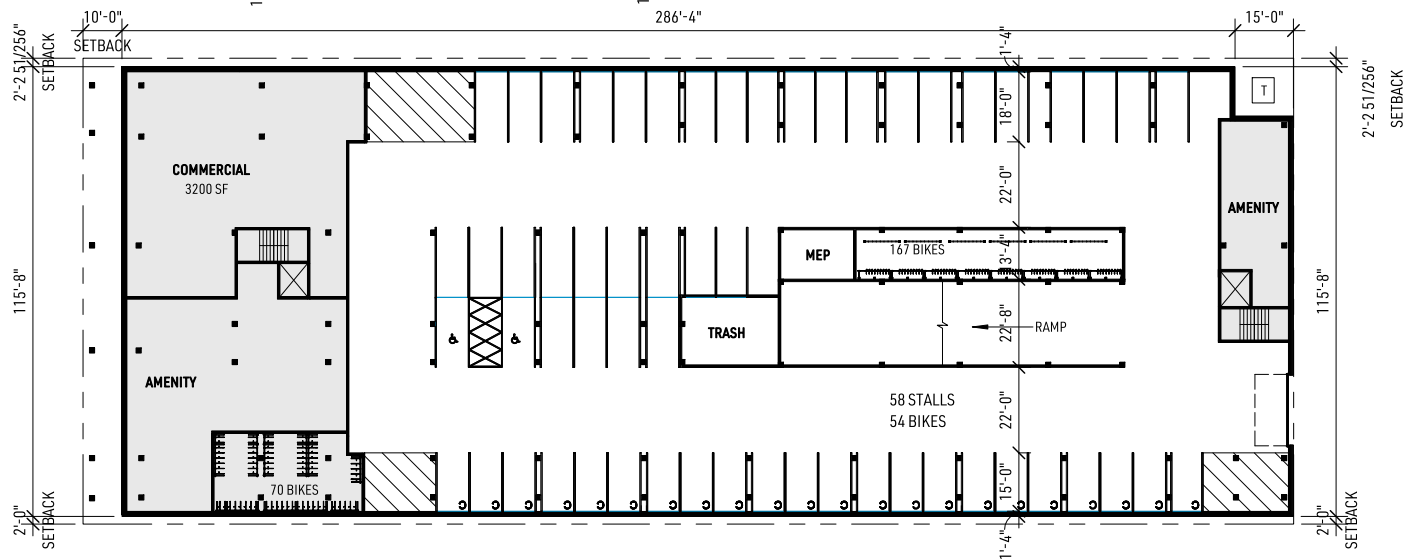
Site Plan

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Level P1 - Scale 1/32" = 1'-0"



Level 1 - Scale 1/32" = 1'-0"

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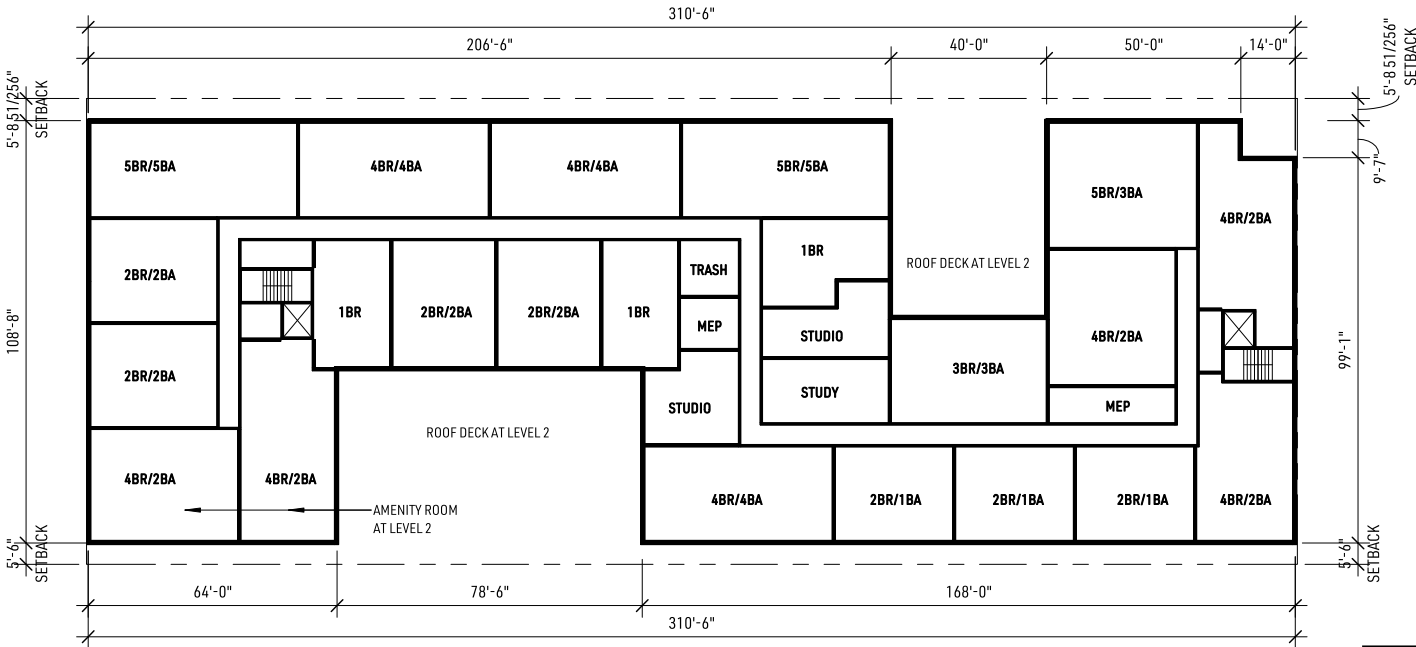
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Floor Plans

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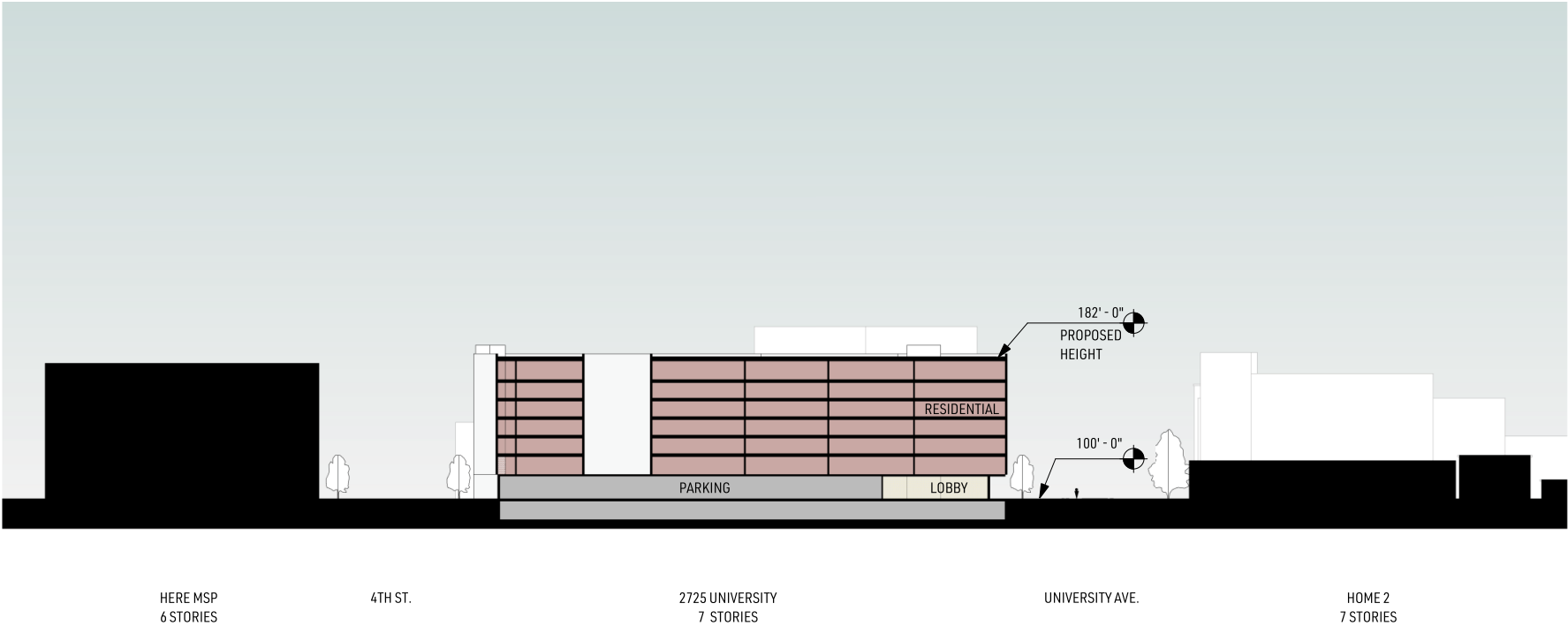
Level 2-7 - Scale 1/32" = 1'-0"



Unit Mix	
Studio	10 Units
1BR	18 Units
2BR/1BA	18 Units
2BR/2BA	24 Units
3BR	7 Units
4BR/2BA	23 Units
4BR/4BA	23 Units
5BR/3BA	19 Units
5BR/5BA	12 Units
Total	140 Units 402 Bedrooms

FITTING WITH CONTEXT

For this project, we request a variance from the 10-story minimum to 7 stories. As seen in the diagrams in the following pages, the proposed project fits in scale with the surrounding buildings and with recent development patterns in the area. Taller buildings recently approved or constructed in the Stadium Village transit area are all on larger, corner or full block sites.



Site Section - Scale 1/64" = 1'-0"

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Site Section

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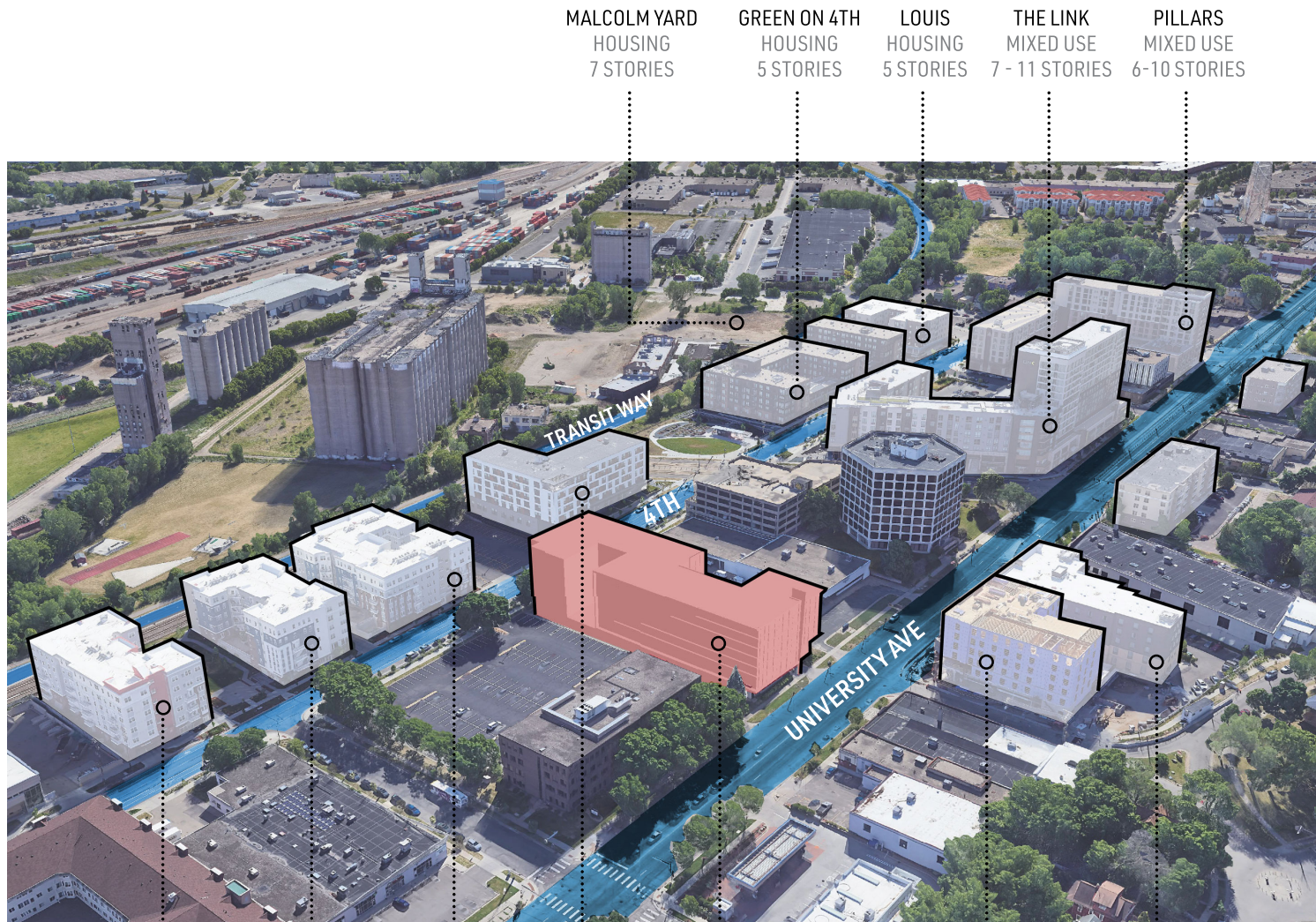
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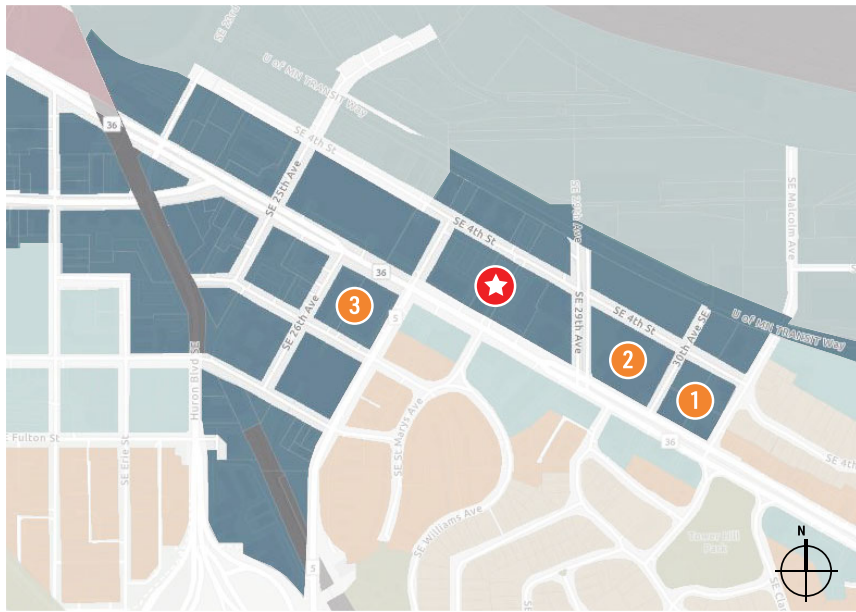
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Height of Recent
Developments

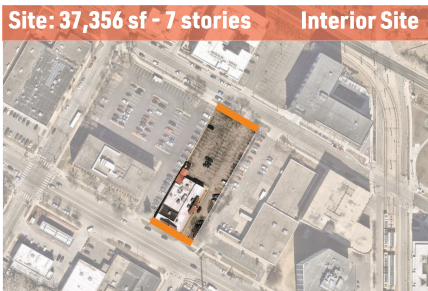
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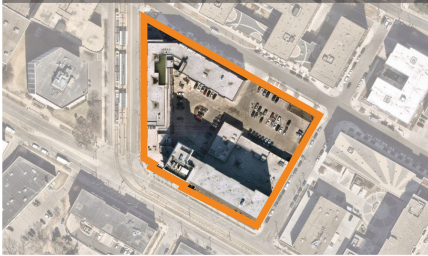




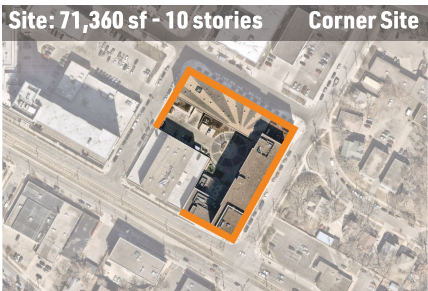
Minneapolis 2040 - Transit 30 Recent Developments in Stadium Village



PROPOSED SITE
Site: 127,074 sf - 11 stories Full Block



2- The Link






1- Pillars of Prospect Park
Site: 61,380 sf - 16 stories Corner Site



3- 2630 University Avenue

LEGEND

-  Site
-  Recent Project in Transit 30
-  Street Frontage

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Recent Taller
Buildings

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View from South

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Exterior
Perspectives

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View from University

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Exterior
Perspectives

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