

SUBJECT: A report and recommendation on a proposed zone change from Residential Mixed (RMX) to Residential Multi-family (RM-0.7) located at 3002-3026 Woodburn Avenue in Evanston.

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Location: 3002-3026 Woodburn Avenue
Cincinnati, OH 45206

Petitioner: Onyx + East
1828 N Central Avenue
Indianapolis, IN 46202

EXHIBITS:

Provided in addition to this report are the following exhibits:

- Exhibit A Location Map
- Exhibit B Zone Change Application
- Exhibit C Zone Change Plat
- Exhibit D Legal Description
- Exhibit E Proposed Development
- Exhibit F Coordinated Site Review Letter
- Exhibit G Community Engagement Summary
- Exhibit H Correspondence

BACKGROUND:

The petitioner, Onyx + East, requests a zone change at 3002 through 3026 Woodburn Avenue in Evanston from Residential Mixed (RMX) to Residential Multi-family (RM-0.7) to permit the future construction of 29 single-family attached and detached residences on their own separate lots. Currently, the subject property consists of nine parcels that will be consolidated into a single parcel consisting of 2.21 acres to be reclassified.

The existing properties currently consist of multiple lots with vacant, abandoned houses and are located at the northeast corner of Woodburn Avenue and DeSales Lane, abutting the East Walnut Hills neighborhood. The proposed zone change is additionally one block to the east of the Walnut Hills neighborhood boundary. The area is characterized by a mix of single-family and multi-family housing. DeSales Flats apartment buildings consisting of one-to-two-bedroom units, sit directly south and west of the site along with Purcell Marion Catholic High School to the south across the other side of DeSales Lane.

The subject property is currently zoned RMX. The RMX zone is intended to create, maintain, and enhance areas of the city that have a mix of lot sizes and house types at moderate intensities (one to three dwelling units). Existing multi-family buildings of four or more units are acknowledged but new construction is not permitted. The proposed zone is RM-0.7 where the character is intended to be urban and should be used where high intensity residential is needed to provide a residential base for important commercial areas. The zone change is needed for the future development to be able to have smaller lot sizes, smaller setback requirements and to eliminate the need for a Conditional Use permit to construct

more than three rowhouses in a row.

ADJACENT LAND USE AND ZONING:

The subject properties are currently zoned RMX (Residential Mixed) as shown on the attached map (Exhibit A). The zoning and land uses surrounding the subject properties are as follows:

North:

Zoning: Residential Mixed (RMX)
Existing Use: Music Resource Center Cincinnati and Urban Stead Cheese Shop

East:

Zoning: Residential Mixed (RMX)
Existing Use: Single-family and multi-family residential (along Hackberry Street)

South:

Zoning: Residential Mixed (RMX); Community Commercial – Mixed (CC-M)
Existing Use: Vacant property (owned/utilized by Purcell Marion Catholic High School)

West:

Zoning: Planned Development #72 (PD-72)
Received a zone change in February 2015 for 92 apartment units.
Existing Use: DeSales Flats II – apartment buildings

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:

The proposed zone change will allow the planned future construction of 29 detached and attached single-family homes. There will be 26 townhomes (two-to-three-bedroom units) and three (3) four-bedroom, single-family homes on the site with a newly created private street with intended access from Woodburn Avenue. Each of these proposed residences will have rear facing garages, with the private streets allowing access. Most of the proposed residences will have the front of the structures face the street on Woodburn Avenue and DeSales Lane, with the three, single-family detached homes in the northeast portion of the project site. Three different varieties of floor plans are being proposed.

If the zone change is approved, all new construction will have to conform to the development regulations set forth in the Cincinnati Municipal Zoning Code in the RM-0.7 zone.

COORDINATED SITE REVIEW:

The applicant submitted their proposed project for Coordinated Site Review in June 2022. The applicant stated their desire for a zone change during this process from RMX to RM-0.7 to allow for more density and smaller setbacks for the proposed single-family homes. Many departments had comments regarding future permits and the Cincinnati Fire Department expressed concerns regarding the accessibility of fire hydrants and roadway access (Exhibit F). The applicant team is aware of these concerns and has been advised to remedy these and work with the appropriate departments. They will need to coordinate with the various permitting agencies to meet requirements outlined in the feedback letter.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

The applicant team submitted a summary of the extensive community engagement completed in advance of filing for the zone change (Exhibit G). The applicant team has met with both the Evanston and East

Walnut Hills community councils, created a website to house information regarding the proposed project (www.liveonwoodburn.com), and sent out a survey for input from residents. The applicant team held three (3) community input sessions themselves with a total of 24 people in attendance from all three sessions. Letters of support were received from the Evanston Community Council and East Walnut Hills Assembly (Exhibit H).

The Department of City Planning and Engagement held a virtual public staff conference on this proposed zone change on July 7, 2022. Notices were sent to property owners within a 400-foot radius of the subject properties, including both the Evanston Community Council and East Walnut Hills Assembly. A total of eight (8) community members attended, in addition to City staff and the applicant team. Most of the questions were regarding project timeline, the project process and notification period, and a concern for increasing property values around the new development.

All property owners within a 400-foot radius of the subject properties and the Evanston Community Council and East Walnut Hills Assembly were also notified of the City Planning Commission meeting. No additional correspondence was received as of July 29, 2022.

CONSISTENCY WITH PLANS:

Plan Cincinnati (2012)

The proposed zone change is consistent with the Live Initiative Area of *Plan Cincinnati*, specifically the Goal to, “Create a more livable community” through the Strategy to “Support and stabilize our neighborhoods” (p. 160). This proposal is additionally consistent with the Goal to “Provide a full spectrum of housing options, and improve housing quality and affordability” (p. 164) and the Strategy to “Offer housing options of varied sizes and types for residents at all stages of life” (p. 169). There have been several similar new developments constructed near this project, including DeSales Flats Apartments and the single-family homes built to the north along Merrimac Street, which are also zoned RM-0.7.

This subject property is located within an identified Neighborhood Center through the Guiding Geographic Principles of *Plan Cincinnati* and correlate with the goals to focus revitalization on existing centers of activity (p. 86).

This proposal is situated along a busy corridor and is located just outside the East Walnut Hills Neighborhood Business District. The business district has also seen several new developments like DeSales Plaza Apartments which has retail on the ground floor. The proposed development is within walking distance of the business district, Purcell Marion Catholic High School, Hoffman Park, Evanston Recreation Center, and various religious institutions.

This request is also consistent with the Guiding Policy Principles to “Increase our population” and to “Be aggressive and strategic in future growth and development” (p. 77). Economic development and job growth is the key to maintain a stable city and growing the Cincinnati tax base to allow for public services and future improvements.

Evanston Work Plan (2019)

The proposed zone change is consistent with Goal 1 of the *Evanston Work Plan* to “create a sustainable, mixed income neighborhood without displacement” through the Objective “There should be a broad spectrum of housing choices in the neighborhood (price and type)”. Lastly, the proposed development is

consistent with the Strategy to “Develop the capacity in Evanston to renovate housing and engage in new construction to reach community goals” (p. 40).

ANALYSIS:

The current RMX zone *does* permit single-family homes and is intended to create, maintain and enhance areas of the city that have a mix of lot sizes and house types at moderate intensities. However, it does not permit any new buildings with four or more units.

The future development has been revised and changed since the initial review done by the Department of City Planning and Engagement – Zoning Division, which identified the need for relief for lot sizes for 27 of the proposed lots and the relief for setback relief for some. A Conditional Use would additionally be required for any runs of rowhomes which exceed three in a row. The proposed zone change would alleviate these requests. The proposed zone change would permit homes to have smaller front yard setbacks which would allow close proximity to the sidewalks and street, creating and enhancing the pedestrian environment in the neighborhood. It would also allow smaller lot sizes for both the rowhomes and single-family homes.

This zone change will permit the planned future construction of 29 residential units and will provide additional housing options to the Evanston and East Walnut Hills communities. It is consistent with the existing surrounding zoning districts and built environment. This proposal will additionally alleviate the abandoned, blighted homes that exist on the property.

Lastly, when the time comes for the applicant to subdivide the lots and if they are proposing condominiums, that request would be exempt from the City’s Subdivision Process per the Ohio Revised Code.

CONCLUSIONS:

The staff of the Department of City Planning and Engagement supports the proposed change in zoning for the following reasons:

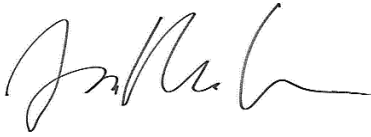
1. The proposed zone is consistent with the existing surrounding built environment with regards to allowable uses, building scale, massing, and adjacent zoning districts.
2. It is consistent with the objective in the *Evanston Work Plan* (2019) that “There should be a broad spectrum of housing choices in the neighborhood (price and type).”
3. It is consistent with *Plan Cincinnati* (2012) within the Live Initiative Area, specifically the goal to, “Provide a full spectrum of housing options, and improve housing quality and affordability.”

RECOMMENDATION:

The staff of the Department of City Planning and Engagement recommends that the City Planning Commission take the following action:

APPROVE the proposed change in zoning from Residential Mixed (RMX) to Residential Multi-family (RM-0.7) at 3002-3026 Woodburn Avenue in Evanston.

Respectfully submitted:



Jesse Urbancsik, Senior City Planner
Department of City Planning and Engagement

Approved:



Katherine Keough-Jurs, FAICP, Director
Department of City Planning and Engagement