

Business Item

Community Development Committee



Committee Meeting Date: August 5, 2024

For the Metropolitan Council: August 14, 2024

Business Item: 2024-199

City of Columbia Heights Medotronic Site and TOD Text Amendment Comprehensive Plan Amendment, Review File 21956-2

District(s), Member(s):	District 2, Reva Chamblis
Policy/Legal Reference:	Metropolitan Land Planning Act (Minn. Stat. § 473.175)
Staff Prepared/Presented:	Eric Wojchik, Planning Analyst (651-602-1330) Angela R. Torres, Senior Manager (651-602-1566)
Division/Department:	Community Development / Regional Planning

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council adopt the attached Review Record and take the following actions:

1. Authorize the City of Columbia Heights to place its comprehensive plan amendment into effect.
2. Revise the City's forecasts for population and households as shown in Table 1 of the Review Record.
3. Revise the City's Affordable Housing Need calculation to: 87 units at 30% AMI, no units at 31-50% AMI, and 99 units at 51-80% AMI.
4. Advise the City to implement the advisory comments in the Review Record for Wastewater, Transportation, Transit, Forecasts, and Housing.

Background

The City submitted the Medtronic Site and TOD Text comprehensive plan amendment on April 5, 2024 and submitted supplemental information on May 14 and May 22, 2024. The amendment reguides 11.74 acres from Commercial to Transit Oriented Development (TOD) land use. The amendment also includes an increase in the density range maximum for TOD land use from 25-50 units per acre (u/a) to 25-65 u/a, including a change in the percentage use from 70% residential/30% commercial to 85% residential/15% commercial. The amendment also includes a forecast increase. The site is located at 800 53rd Avenue NE. The purpose of the amendment is to accommodate future development. This is the City's first amendment to its 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

Rationale

The proposed amendment conforms to regional system plans, is consistent with Council policies, and is compatible with the plans of other local communities and school districts.

Thrive Lens Analysis

The proposed amendment is reviewed against the land use policies in *Thrive MSP 2040*. To achieve the outcomes identified in Thrive, the metropolitan development guide defines the Land

Use Policy for the region and includes strategies for local governments and the Council to implement. These policies and strategies are interrelated and, taken together, serve to achieve the outcomes identified in Thrive.

Funding

None.



REVIEW RECORD

City of Columbia Heights

Medtronic Site and TOD Text Amendment Comprehensive Plan Amendment

Review File No. 21956-2, Business Item No. 2024-199

BACKGROUND

The City of Columbia Heights is located in southern Anoka County, surrounded by the communities of Fridley to the north and west, New Brighton and Saint Anthony to the east, and Minneapolis to the south. The City of Hilltop is entirely enclosed within the City (Figure 1).

Thrive MSP 2040 (Thrive) designates Columbia Heights with an “Urban Center” community designation. The Council forecasts from 2020 to 2040 that the City will grow from 20,500 to 23,100 population and 8,400 to 9,300 households. The Council also forecasts that between 2020 and 2040, the City’s employment will increase from 4,280 to 4,600 jobs.

The Metropolitan Council reviewed the City of Columbia Heights 2040 Comprehensive Plan ([Business Item 2019-236 JT](#), Review File No. 21956-1) on September 25, 2019. This is the first comprehensive plan amendment since the 2040 Plan was reviewed.

REQUEST SUMMARY

The amendment proposes to reguide 11.74 acres from Commercial to Transit Oriented Development (TOD) land use. The amendment also includes an increase in the density range maximum for TOD land use from 25-50 units per acre (u/a) to 25-65 u/a, including a change in the percentage use from 70% residential/30% commercial to 85% residential/15% commercial. The amendment also includes a forecast increase. The site is located at 800 53rd Avenue NE. The purpose of the amendment is to accommodate future development.

OVERVIEW

Conformance with Regional Systems

The amendment conforms to the Regional System Plans for Regional Parks, Transportation (including Aviation), and Wastewater, with no substantial impact on, or departure from, these plans.

Consistency with Council Policies

The amendment is consistent with *Thrive MSP 2040*, with the *Housing Policy Plan*, with water resources management, and is consistent with Council forecasts. The amendment includes an increase to forecasts.

Compatibility with Plans of Adjacent Jurisdictions

The amendment will not have an impact on adjacent communities, school districts, or watershed districts, and is compatible with the plans of those districts.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTIONS

- The Council acted on the 2040 Plan on September 25, 2019 ([Business Item 2019-236 JT](#), Review File No. 21956-1).

ISSUES

- I. Does the amendment conform to the regional system plans?
- II. Is the amendment consistent with *Thrive MSP 2040* and other Council policies?
- III. Does the amendment change the City’s forecasts?



- IV. Is the amendment compatible with the plans of adjacent local governmental units and affected jurisdictions?

ISSUES ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Conformance with Regional Systems

The amendment conforms to the regional system plan for Regional Parks, Transportation (including Aviation), and Wastewater, with no substantial impact on, or departure from, these system plans. Additional review comments are included below.

Regional Parks

Reviewer: Colin Kelly, Community Development (CD) – Regional Parks (651-602-1361)

The proposed amendment conforms to the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*. There are no existing or planned units of the Regional Parks and Trails System in the vicinity of the proposed land use change. The nearest unit – Mississippi River Regional Trail – is approximately 1.7 miles west, in Fridley. The proposed land use change will not have an adverse impact on Mississippi River Regional Trail or the Regional Parks and Trails System more broadly.

Wastewater Service

Reviewer: Roger Janzig, Environmental Services (ES) – Wastewater Planning and Community Programs (roger.janzig@metc.state.mn.us)

The proposed amendment conforms to the *2040 Water Resources Policy Plan (WRPP)*. The regional system has adequate capacity to serve the proposed potential development associated with this amendment.

Advisory Comments

The Council will work to correct service area assumptions for the regional system based on measured wastewater flow performed for this amendment. Council staff may reach out to the City for additional discussion and information as the development progresses.

Transportation

Reviewer: Joe Widing, Metropolitan Transportation Services (MTS) (651-602-1822)

The proposed amendment conforms to the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan (TPP)*. The amendment accurately responds to updates to the TPP.

Transit oriented development can mean more than just increased density next to transit stations. As is noted in the [2040 Transportation Policy Plan](#), interconnected street networks which maximize pedestrian and bicycle access are important factors for serving higher housing and employment densities.

Advisory Comments

The concept plan for this site could consider improving network connectivity through the site for all modes, utilizing existing facilities nearby to align conceptual development on this parcel to allow for a more cohesive, connected and transit supporting development pattern for the area. Opportunities should be considered to allow for a future extension of 52nd Street to the site as Central Avenue parcels redevelop to improve circulation within and to the site to relieve traffic pressure on 53rd Avenue and provide travel options to all users and modes in the area. At a minimum, consider ways that the existing trail could be connected to Central Avenue to provide access to local bus stops that are planned to be retained.

Transit

Reviewer: Victoria Dan, Metro Transit (MT) (612-349-7648)

Council staff appreciate the forward thinking of the City to develop a concept plan to aid in developing a vision for future transit supporting land uses near future transit investments and are supportive of the primary mixed-use building being oriented toward 53rd Avenue and its proximity to the future F Line station.

Advisory Comments

To maximize this area to better support transit, walking and biking, staff offer the following comments:

- The existing bus stops are depicted fairly accurately with the exception of the temporary bus stop in the Petco parking lot that can be removed (used for detour only). In coordination with 53rd Avenue reconstruction, several local bus stops on 53rd Avenue were identified for consolidation. These consolidations include the elimination of the stop pair on 53rd Avenue at Sullivan Drive, which is depicted in the concept plans. These stops will likely be permanently closed by the end of this construction season.
- The proposed concept plans depict the METRO F Line station on 53rd Avenue at Monroe Street, where we currently site bus stops. As shown in the [Metro F Line Corridor Plan](#), the future F Line station is actually planning the future platforms directly at the existing western Medtronic driveway, which is shown as being maintained in the concept plan. There will be an eastbound platform nearside the driveway, and a westbound platform farside the driveway. When F Line opens, local (non-BRT) stops on 53rd Avenue will be eliminated. Consider depicting the future F Line station in the correct location and ways in which the concept plan could incorporate the planned station to enhance transit access.

Consistency with Council Policy

The amendment is consistent with Council policies for forecasts, land use, housing, sub-surface sewage treatment systems, and water supply. Additional review comments are detailed below.

Forecasts

Reviewer: Todd Graham, CD – Research (651-602-1322)

The Plan amendment materials discuss redevelopment of the site, adding 490 housing units and 16,000–20,000 sq feet of commercial or light industrial space at Medtronic site/Sullivan Lake Park. Additional redevelopment sites, elsewhere in Columbia Heights, are listed in the City’s Plan (2019). Council staff find the City’s land use plan and sites can accommodate 10,000 households.

The Plan Amendment requests a communitywide growth forecast revision. Council and City staff have discussed and agree on the revised forecast table below. Numbers to be revised are underlined.

Table 1. Metropolitan Council City of Columbia Heights Forecasts

Category	Census 2020	Current Approved Forecast			Forecast Revision		
		2020	2030	2040	2020	2030	2040
Population	21,973	20,500	21,800	23,100	<u>22,000</u>	<u>23,400</u>	<u>24,500</u>
Households	8,777	8,400	8,900	9,300	<u>8,800</u>	<u>9,500</u>	<u>10,000</u>
Employment	3,831	4,280	4,440	4,600	<u>3,830</u>	4,440	4,600

Advisory Comments

Sewer-serviced forecast numbers will be the same as the communitywide totals. With this revision, the Affordable Housing Need calculation for Columbia Heights is recalculated to: 87 units at 30% AMI, no units at 31-50% AMI, and 99 units at 51-80% AMI. Metropolitan Council will revise the forecast and the Affordable Housing Need, simultaneous with action on the amendment.

Thrive MSP 2040 and Land Use

Reviewer: Eric Wojchik, CD – Local Planning Assistance (651-602-1330)

Thrive MSP 2040 identifies the City as an Urban Center Community. The amendment proposes to reguide 11.74 acres from Commercial to Transit Oriented Development (TOD) land use. The amendment also includes a text amendment that increases the density range maximum for TOD land use from 25-50 units per acre (u/a) to 25 - 65 u/a, including a change in the percentage use from 70% residential/30% commercial to 85% residential/15% commercial. The amendment also includes a forecast increase (Table 1). The site is located at 800 53rd Avenue NE (see Figure 2). The purpose of the amendment is to accommodate future development as this site redevelops.



Urban Center communities are expected to plan for forecasted population and household growth at overall average densities of at least 20 units per acre. This amendment increases the planned units in the TOD land use category by 326 units minimum and by 1,020 units at the maximum end of the density range. The amendment increases the City’s planned residential density from 20.8 units per acre to 22.1 units per acre (Table 2). The City’s planned density continues to exceed the minimum density (20 units per acre) expected of Urban Center communities.

Table 2. Planned Residential Density, City of Columbia Heights

Category	2018-2040 Change				
	Min	Density Max	Net Acres	Min Units	Max Units
Low Density Residential	3	7.5	0.0	0	0
Medium Density Residential	8	14.5	0.0	0	0
High Density Residential	15	35	12.7	190	445
Transit Oriented Development*	25	<u>65</u>	<u>22.4</u>	<u>559</u>	<u>1,453</u>
Transitional Development**	25	50	9.3	233	466
TOTALS			44.4	982	2,364
Overall Density				22.1	53.2

*85% residential
**50% residential

Housing

Reviewer: Olivia Boerschinger, CD – Housing (651-602-1327)

The proposed amendment is consistent with the Council’s *Housing Policy Plan*. The Plan currently provides sufficient land to address the City’s share of the region’s 2021-2030 need for affordable housing, which is 186 units. The proposed amendment increases the City’s inventory of land guided to support the development of low- and moderate-income housing. As of this amendment, the Plan will be guiding approximately 21 acres of higher density residential land such that at least 419 units could be built.

The proposed amendment, which includes both future land use change and a text amendment will allow for residential development (TOD land use) on a parcel previously guided Commercial. Along with the Future Land Use change, the Text Amendment proposes increasing the maximum density for the TOD land use to 65 units/acre as well as adjusting the ratio of residential development in the TOD Land Use from 70% to 85%. The City’s Land Guided for Affordable Housing table has been adjusted to reflect these changes. This amendment allows the City to implement the housing element of their 2040 Plan and does not directly contribute to their efforts to address its share of the region’s need for affordable housing in the 2021-2030 decade.

Columbia Heights is a participant in Livable Communities Act (LCA) programs, and in 2021 was awarded \$820,000 in Livable Communities Demonstration Account (LCDA) funds.

Advisory Comments

With the forecast revision, as described in the Forecasts section, the Affordable Housing Need calculation for Columbia Heights has been recalculated to 186 units total – 87 units at 30% AMI, no units at 31-50% AMI, and 99 units at 51-80% AMI.

Compatibility with Plans of Adjacent Governmental Units and Plans of Affected Special Districts and School Districts

The proposed amendment is compatible with the plans of adjacent jurisdictions. No compatibility issues with plans of adjacent governmental units and plans of affected special districts and school districts were identified.

ATTACHMENTS

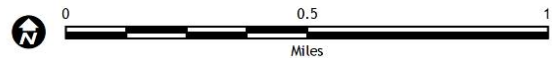
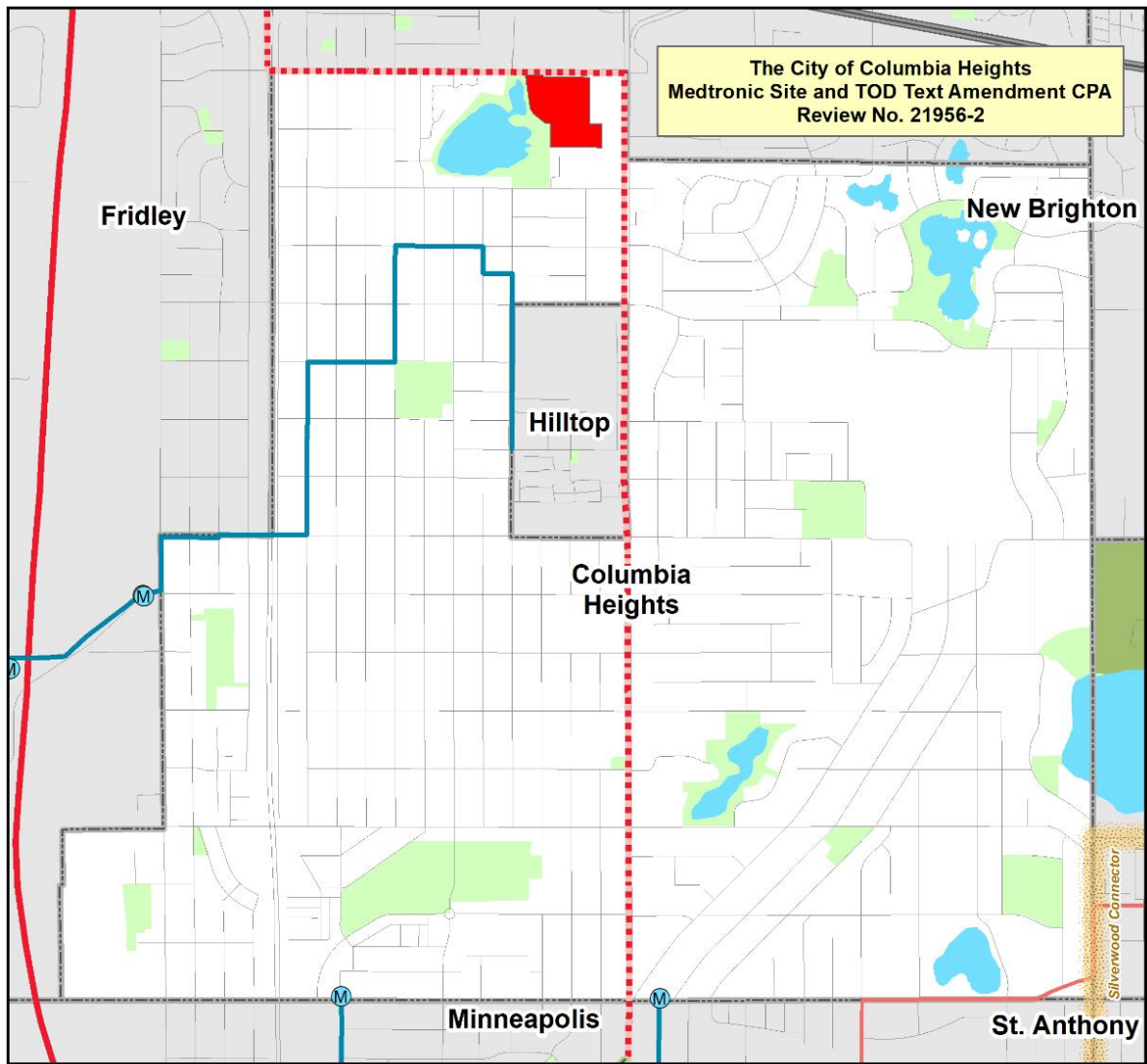
- Figure 1: Location Map Showing Regional Systems
- Figure 2: Location Map Showing Community Designations



- Figure 3: Current 2040 Land Use Guiding
- Figure 4: Proposed 2040 Land Use Guiding
- Figure 5: Land Guided for Affordable Housing

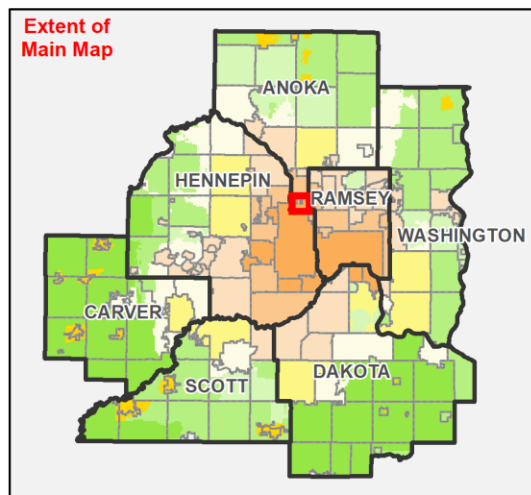
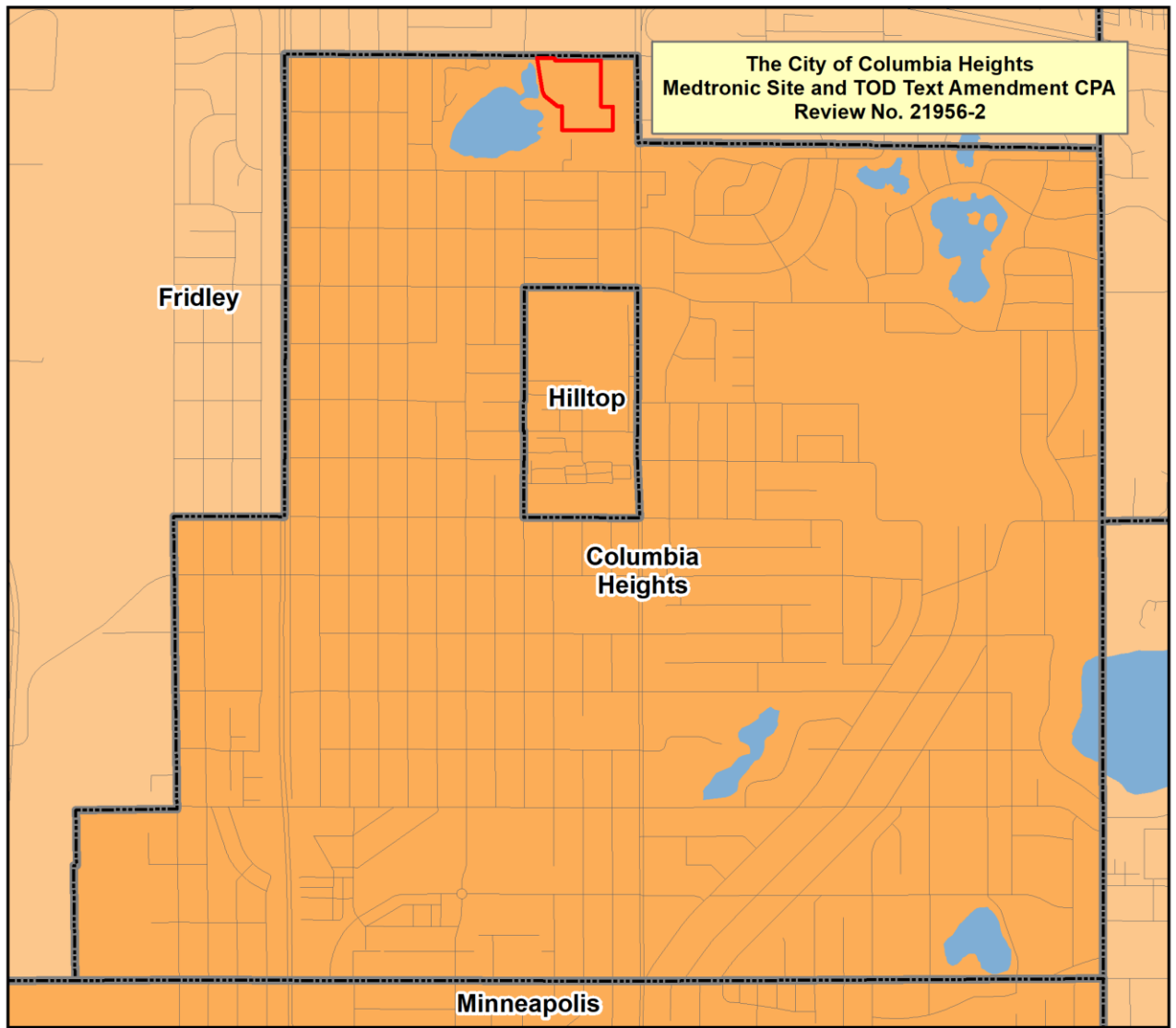


Figure 1. Location Map Showing Regional Systems



- Regional Systems**
- Regional Transitways**
 - Existing
 - Planned Current Revenue Scenario
 - Potential Increased Revenue Scenario
- Wastewater**
 - Meters
 - MCES Interceptors
 - Lift Stations
 - MCES Treatment Plants
- Regional Highway System**
 - Interstates
 - US Highways
 - State Highways
 - County Roads
 - Road Centerlines
- Regional Parks**
 - Existing (Open to Public)
 - In Master Plan (Not Open to Public)
 - Planned Units
 - Other Parks, Preserves, Refuges and Natural Areas
- Regional Trails**
 - Existing (Open to Public)
 - Existing (Not Open to Public)
 - Planned Regional Trails
 - Regional Trail Search Corridors

Figure 2. Location Map Showing Community Designations



ThriveMSP 2040 Community Designations

- Agricultural
- Rural Residential
- Diversified Rural
- Rural Center
- Emerging Suburban Edge
- Suburban Edge
- Suburban
- Urban
- Urban Center



Figure 3. Current 2040 Land Use Guiding



Figure 5. Land Guided for Affordable Housing

2021-2030 share of regional need for Affordable Housing: **186 units**
 2021-2030 total regional need for Affordable Housing: **37,900 units**

	Available Acres	X	Minimum Density <i>(units per acre)</i>	X	Expected % Residential <i>(if mixed use)</i>	=	Minimum Units Possible
High Density Residential	5.73		15		100%		86
Transit Oriented Development	15.64		25		85%		333
Total	21						419

