

# VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEETING

Wednesday, May 3, 2023 – 6:00 PM Village Hall – 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Community Room, 400 Park Ave., River Forest, IL

# **AGENDA**

Public comments and any responses will be shared with the Commission. You may submit your public comments via email in advance of the meeting to: Matt Walsh at <a href="mailto:mwalsh@vrf.us">mwalsh@vrf.us</a>. You may listen to the meeting by participating in a Zoom conference call as follows, dial-in number: 312-626-6799 with meeting ID: 811 5658 9194 or visit <a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81156589194">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81156589194</a>.

- 1. Call to Order/Roll Call
- 2. Public Comment
- 3. Approval of Meeting Minutes April 5, 2023
- 4. Chamber of Commerce Update
- 5. Discussion of Madison Street & North Avenue Corridor Redevelopment Plan
  - a. Consideration and Possible Action on Recommendations to Village Board Regarding Potential Zoning Code Amendments

Please note that all zoning code amendments require a public hearing with the Zoning Board of Appeals. Any recommendation from the Economic Development Commission will be referred to the Zoning Board of Appeals by the Village Board.

- 6. Continued Discussion Regarding Business Community Retention/Support Strategies and Communication
- 7. Development Updates
- 8. Other Business
- 9. Adjournment

# VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES April 5, 2023

A meeting of the Village of River Forest Economic Development Commission was held on Wednesday, April 5, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. in the 1st Floor Community Room of Village Hall, 400 Park Avenue, River Forest, Illinois.

# 1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m.

Upon roll call, the following persons were:

Present: Chairman Cuyler Brown, Commissioners Robert Graham, Katie Lowes,

Rajendra Chiplunkar, Carr Preston, Walter Wahlfedlt.

Absent: Commissioner Brangle.

Also Present: Interim Village Administrator Matt Walsh, Village Planning Consultant John

Houseal, Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Liz Holt.

## 2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Margaret Daley of the 1300 block of William expressed opposition to the traffic barriers in the northeast neighborhood and requested their removal. Daley also expressed opposition to traffic enforcement in the area.

Chairman Brown and Administrator Walsh explained the role of the Economic Development Commission and directed concerns on the traffic barriers to the Village Board and Traffic & Safety Commission.

Renee Duba of the 000 block of Franklin encouraged the Commission to consider developments outside of four or five story mixed used structures. Duba stated their belief that development is difficult and that developers will be expecting more density to make profit. Duba encouraged the Village to consider social mobility, sustainability and transit access for any development.

Renee Duba continued their comments with a letter from the Lathrop Ashland Franklin neighborhood group. Duba shared that the group wants a development that is charming and friendly to neighbors. Duba added that zoning changes are not required to attract a positive development. Duba added that developments should be reasonably sized.

Annette Madden, of the 000 block of Ashland, began their comments by comparing River Forest's zoning code adoptions with other nearby communities. Madden stated there may

be support for decreasing the size of units, however would not support the elimination of the bedroom requirement.

Cal Davis, of the 000 block of Franklin, stated that the proposed changes are not acceptable. Davis expressed concerns for light blockage and the elimination of setbacks.

Beth Cheng, of the 000 block of Franklin, asked that the Economic Development Commission take more time to consider the proposed changes and to allow for additional community input. Cheng added that variations should be considered on a case by case basis, and believes there is no need for a global change. Cheng asked for more background on the zoning recommendations.

Teresa Peavy, of the 000 block of Ashland, asked for more background for why this topic is being discussed at this time and for data on what developers need. Peavy also asked if there are any assurances that variations would not be requested.

Administrator Walsh read a letter from Kathleen and Daniel Corcos of the 100 block of Franklin. The letter stated opposition to changes to square foot requirements, parking minimum decreases, cul-de-sacs and asked that sufficient space be included for any retail space.

Administrator Walsh read a letter from Angie Grover of the 7600 block of Vine. Grover expressed opposition to increasing building height, decreasing parking requirements, eliminating setback requirements and asked that traffic be considered for any changes.

Administrator Walsh read a letter from Megan Sanfillippo. Megan encouraged the Commission to recommend zoning practices that allow for the highest and best use of the corridor parcels. Megan explained that this means neighborhood amenities and a mix of uses. Megan asked that consideration be given to neighbors concerns on traffic, privacy and light.

# 3. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES - February 1, 2023

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Graham and SECONDED by Commissioner Lowes to approve the minutes of the February 1, 2023 meeting of the Economic Development Commission. MOTION PASSED by unanimous vote.

## 4. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE UPDATE

Director Holt promoted the upcoming Health and Wellness Fair at FFC in Oak Park.

# 5. DISCUSSION OF MADISON STREET & NORTH AVENUE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

Administrator Walsh introduced John Houseal of Houseal Lavigne and provided some background on the corridor planning process. Walsh explained the process for zoning code amendments, and the requirement that any changes are scrutinized and discussed by the

Zoning Board of Appeals. Walsh also summarized relevant comments from the February stakeholder meeting.

John Houseal, of Houseal Lavigne, introduced himself and provided additional background.

Houseal explained that every planned development proposal has required significant allowances and waivers from the underlying zoning code. The examination of zoning codes was prescribed in the Comprehensive Plan. Houseal reiterated that there are no proposed developments and explained that the concept renderings are meant to show scale and facilitate discussion.

Houseal began the presentation and reviewed the opportunity sites for the North Avenue and Madison Street corridors. Houseal explained the concept renderings. Houseal and Walsh confirmed that the primary concern from the stakeholder meeting for North Avenue was providing enough parking onsite for any uses on the corridor.

John Houseal discussed the newer mixed-use building on the Forest Park side of Madison Street and used it as a comparison for some of the zoning proposals. Houseal explained the rationale for the rendering that included a cul-de-sac. Houseal explained the challenge with matching the setback for the commercial corridor to the residential neighborhood on a different street. Houseal stated the current code does not require it.

Houseal then reviewed the existing code language and the proposed revisions and considerations for building height, floor area ratio, density, average unit size, parking standards and the bedroom requirement. Houseal then reviewed the standards with Elmwood Park and Forest Park.

Chairman Brown stated that he agrees with many of the public comments about the types of development but believes that zoning changes are necessary. The zoning changes will allow for the Village to have appealing options.

Commissioner Chiplunkar asked about the impact of the cul-de-sac as shown. John Houseal explained that the cul-de-sac is not proposed, it is just shown for consideration. Commissioner Chiplunkar then asked about the potential traffic impacts when zoning changes are made. Houseal responded that traffic would be analyzed when a planned development application is received, and the specific uses are known. Chiplunkar expressed concern for the impact on the neighborhood and asked whether projections could be made based on the proposed code revisions.

Commissioner Chiplunkar asked about the impact on schools, and stated that this process starts the ball rolling for more development. Commissioner Wahlfeldt stated that the goal is to invite proposals, and there is no promise for approval of specific projects. Wahlfedt added that he shares concerns about neighborhood impacts as a resident. Based on his professional

experience, the Village needs to be more welcoming to developers so that the Village can choose the right options.

Commissioner Chiplunkar reiterated his concerns and expressed doubts about the process. Chairman Brown stated that the goal is to attract charming amenities by being flexible with the zoning code. Brown reiterated that the approval process for any development is rigorous.

Commissioner Graham stated that commercial areas are bound to have impacts on adjacent neighborhoods. Graham added that development will not come without changes to zoning and that traffic flows will depend on the specific proposals. Graham stated that less people are driving, so the proposal for reducing parking makes sense. Graham continued by expressing agreement with the height increases and the density proposals.

Commissioner Lowes asked about the next steps and proposed waiting to make final decisions. Administrator Walsh responded that the Commission could decide to wait for final decisions, however the Village Board is interested in continued progress on the discussion. Chairman Brown proposed that no decisions be made tonight. The Commission expressed agreement.

Chairman Brown made a motion to table a vote on recommendations to the next Commission meeting, Member Lowes seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

# 6. CONTINUED DISCUSSION REGARDING BUSINESS COMMUNITY RETENTION/ SUPPORT STRATEGIES AND COMMUNICATION

None.

# 7. DEVELOPMENT UPDATES

None

# 8. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

# 9. ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Brown and SECONDED by Commissioner Lowes to adjourn the April 5, 2023, meeting of the Economic Development Commission at 8:00 p.m. MOTION PASSED by unanimous vote.

Respectfully Submitted:	
	Date:
Matt Walsh, Village Administrator	

Cuyler Brown, Chairman Economic Development Commission

PLANNING DESIGN DEVELOPMENT



# **MEMORANDUM**

Date: April 28, 2023 SENT VIA EMAIL

To: Matt Walsh, Village Administrator

Village of River Forest

From: Houseal Lavigne

John Houseal, FAICP, Partner Nik Davis, AICP, Principal

Re: River Forest Corridors – EDC Zoning Considerations

The purpose of this memo is to summarize and present proposed zoning ordinance amendments for Economic Development Commission (EDC) consideration. It is anticipated that after final review and discussion, any EDC proposed zoning ordinance amendments would be sent to the Village Board for consideration. The Village Board could then refer the matter to the Zoning Board of Appeals to conduct the appropriate and required public hearing for any proposed zoning ordinance text amendment. The ZBA would then make its recommendation to the Village Board, who would then take final action, is so inclined.

The Village sought the assistance of Houseal Lavigne in May 2022, requesting the firm work with the EDC to examine commercial district zoning and development regulations along North Avenue and Madison Street. The effort was to determine if and what regulatory amendments may be necessary and desirable for the Village, to better attract and accommodate viable and appropriate economic development. Examining the commercial zoning and development regulations along the Village's corridors is a recommendation of the *River Forest Forward Comprehensive Plan*, adopted in May 2019.

Over the past several months the EDC has devoted several meetings to discussing this matter. In addition to EDC meetings, meetings were held with neighbors of the North Avenue and Madison Street corridors, and interviews were conducted with developers, architects, and planners familiar with and involved with development in the River Forest, Forest Park, and Oak Park area. Development regulations of communities adjacent to the corridors were also examined. The process also included the use of illustrative development renderings for discussion purposes only, to explore issues related to building mass, height, setback, parking, proximity to adjacent properties, and more.

The following page provides the zoning amendments being proposed for EDC consideration based on the discussion, feedback, and input obtained throughout the process.

# HOUSEAL LAVIGNE ASSOCIATES, LLC

CHICAGO, IL 188 West Randolph Street, Suite 200 Chicago, Illinois 60601 (312) 372-1008

# **EDC Zoning Considerations**

# **Parking Requirements**

Existing: 2 parking spaces per unit

Proposed: 1.0 - 1.5 parking space per unit

# **Building Height (North Avenue)**

Existing: 50' Proposed: 65'

# **Building Height (Madison Street)**

Existing: 30' Proposed:50'

## **Density**

Existing: 2,800 sf of lot area per unit (17 dua)

Proposed: 500-1,000 sf of lot area per unit (87-43 dua)

## **FAR**

Existing: 2.75

Proposed: eliminate FAR requirement

## **Unit Size**

Existing: 1,800 sf (average gross living area)
Proposed: 1,000 sf (average gross living area)

## **Setbacks**

No change recommended.

# **Bedroom Requirement**

Existing: every unit shall have at least one bedroom (no studios)

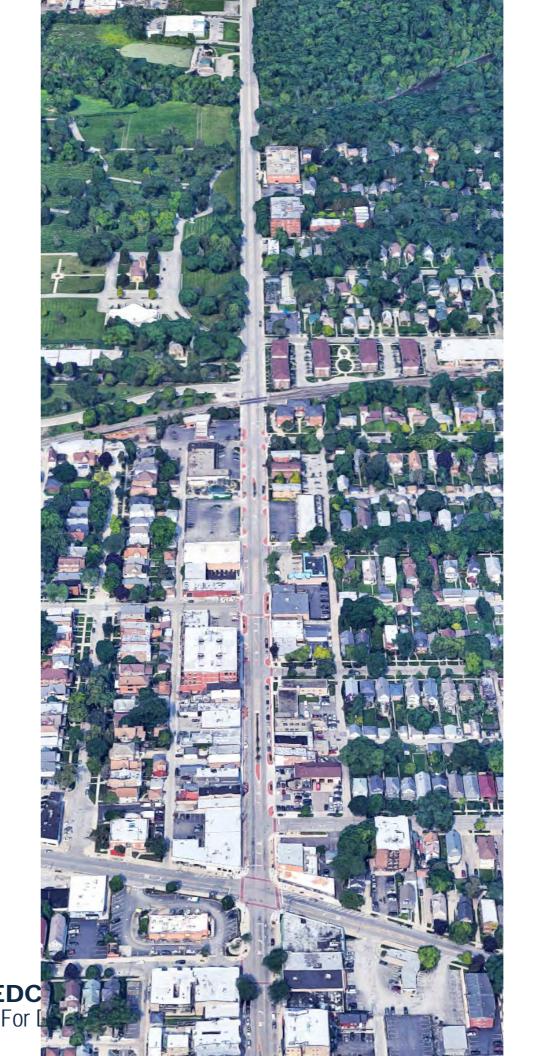
Proposed: consider eliminating requirement of at least one bedroom

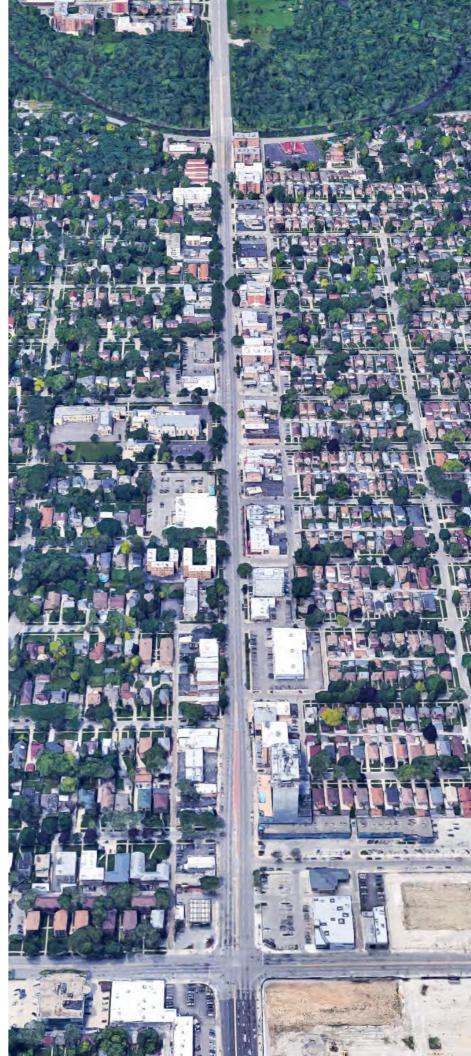
# CORRIDOR REDEVELOPMENT & REGULATORY PLAN PROCESS

RIVER FOREST EDC | APRIL 5, 2023

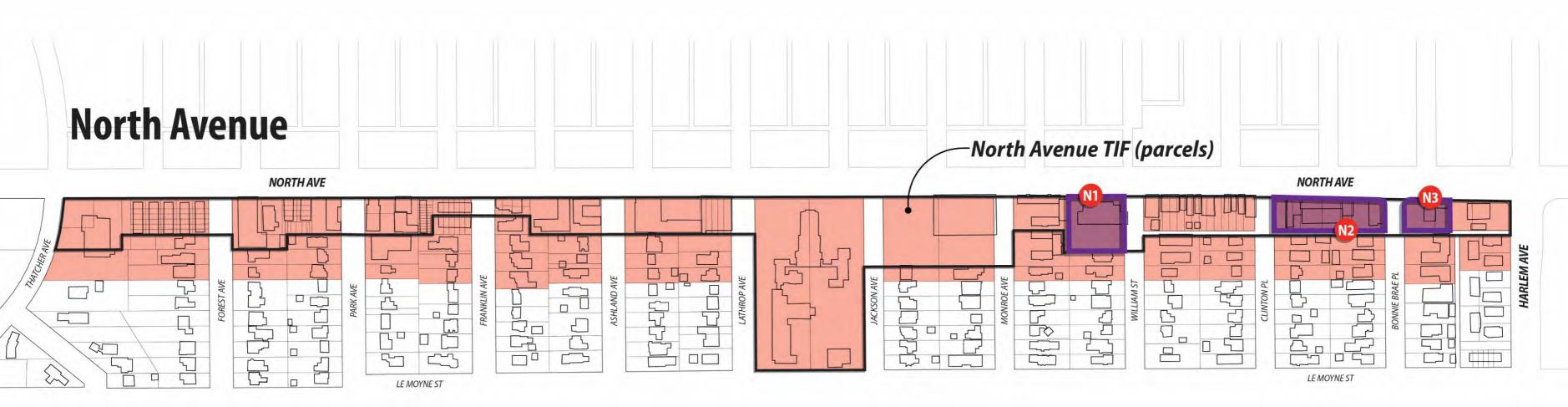
# Agenda

- Opportunity Sites
- Preliminary Zoning Considerations





# OPPORTUNITY SITES



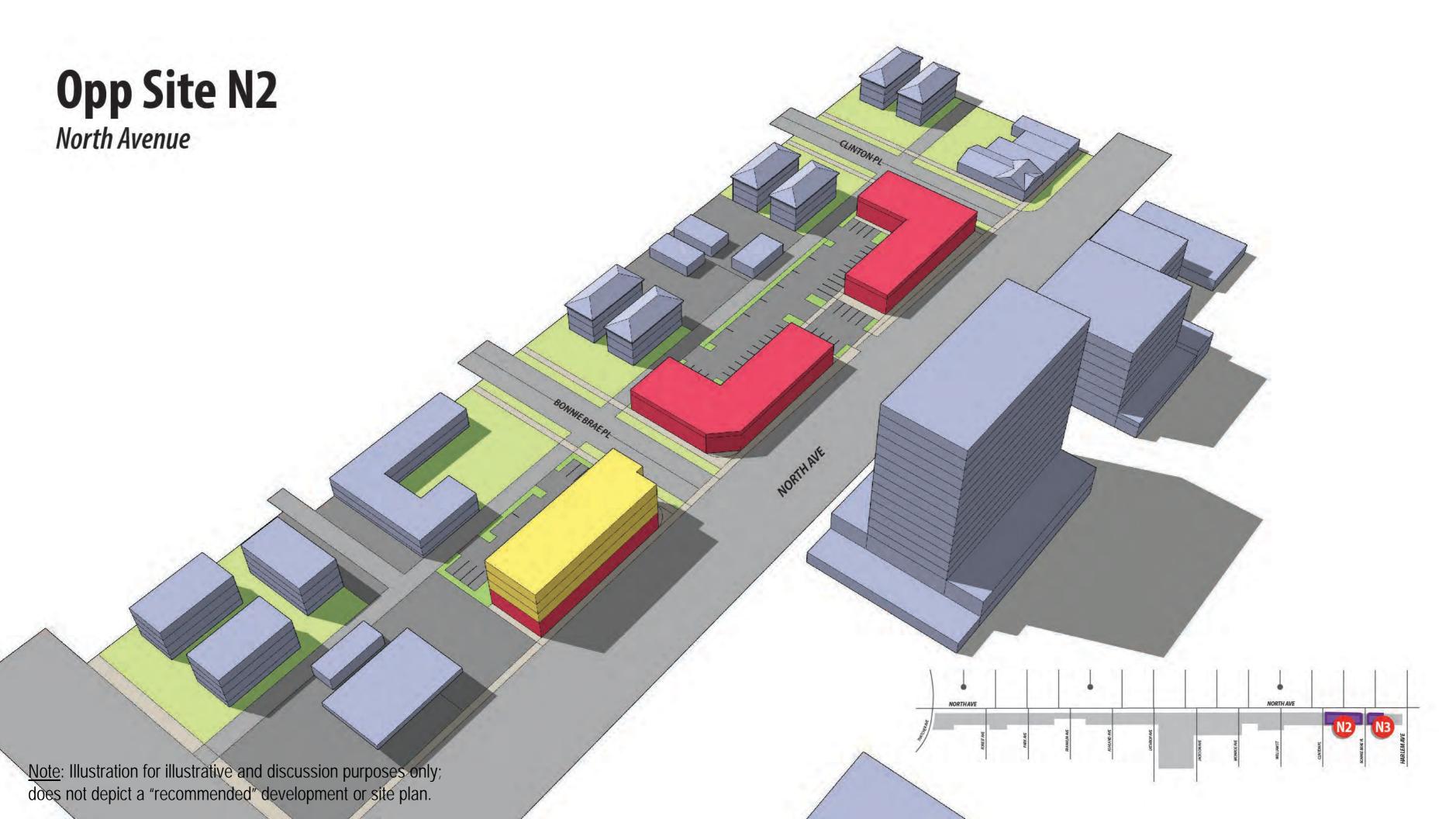
# NORTH AVENUE OPP SITE N11





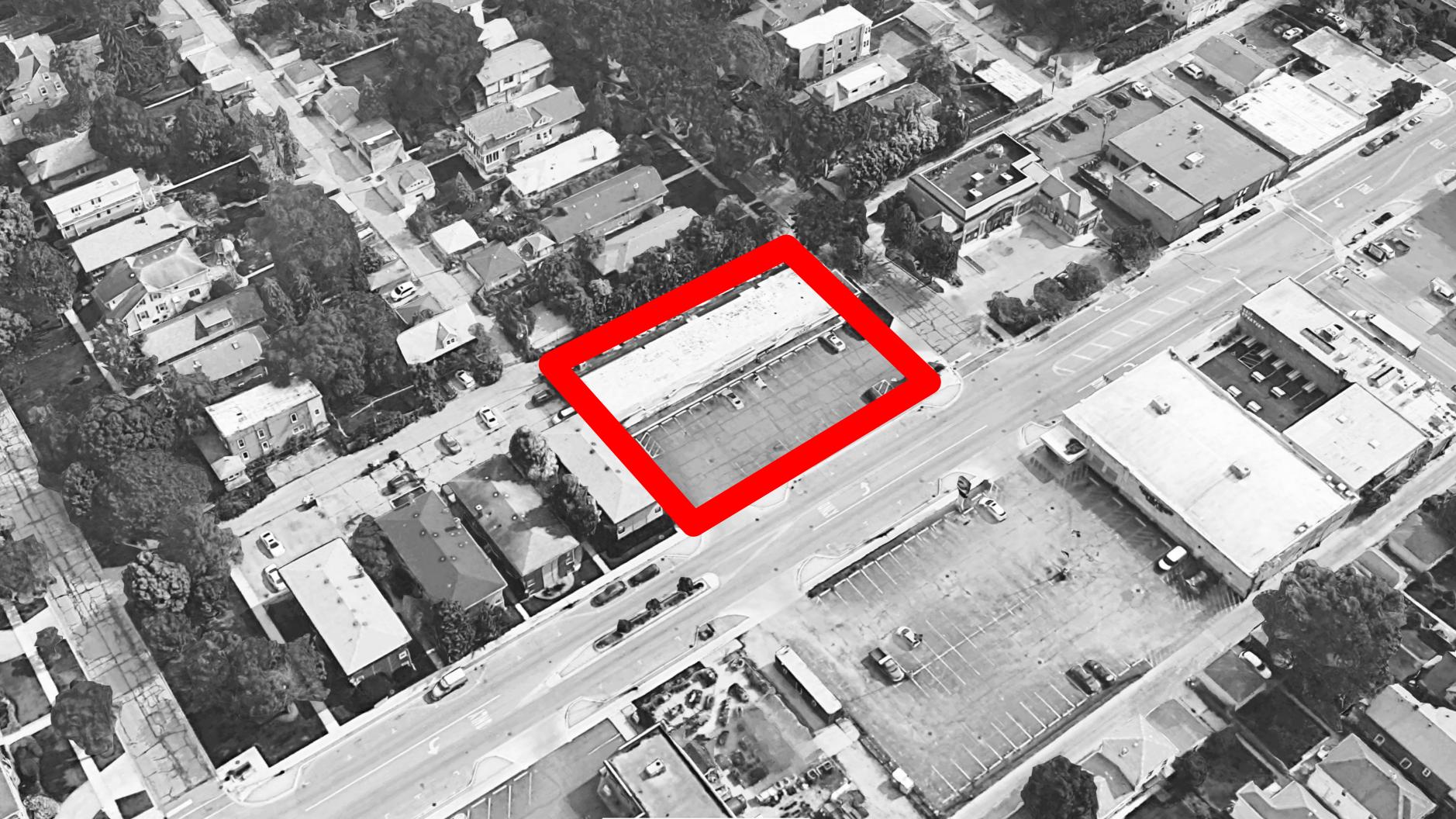
# NORTH AVENUE OPP SITE N2 AND 3





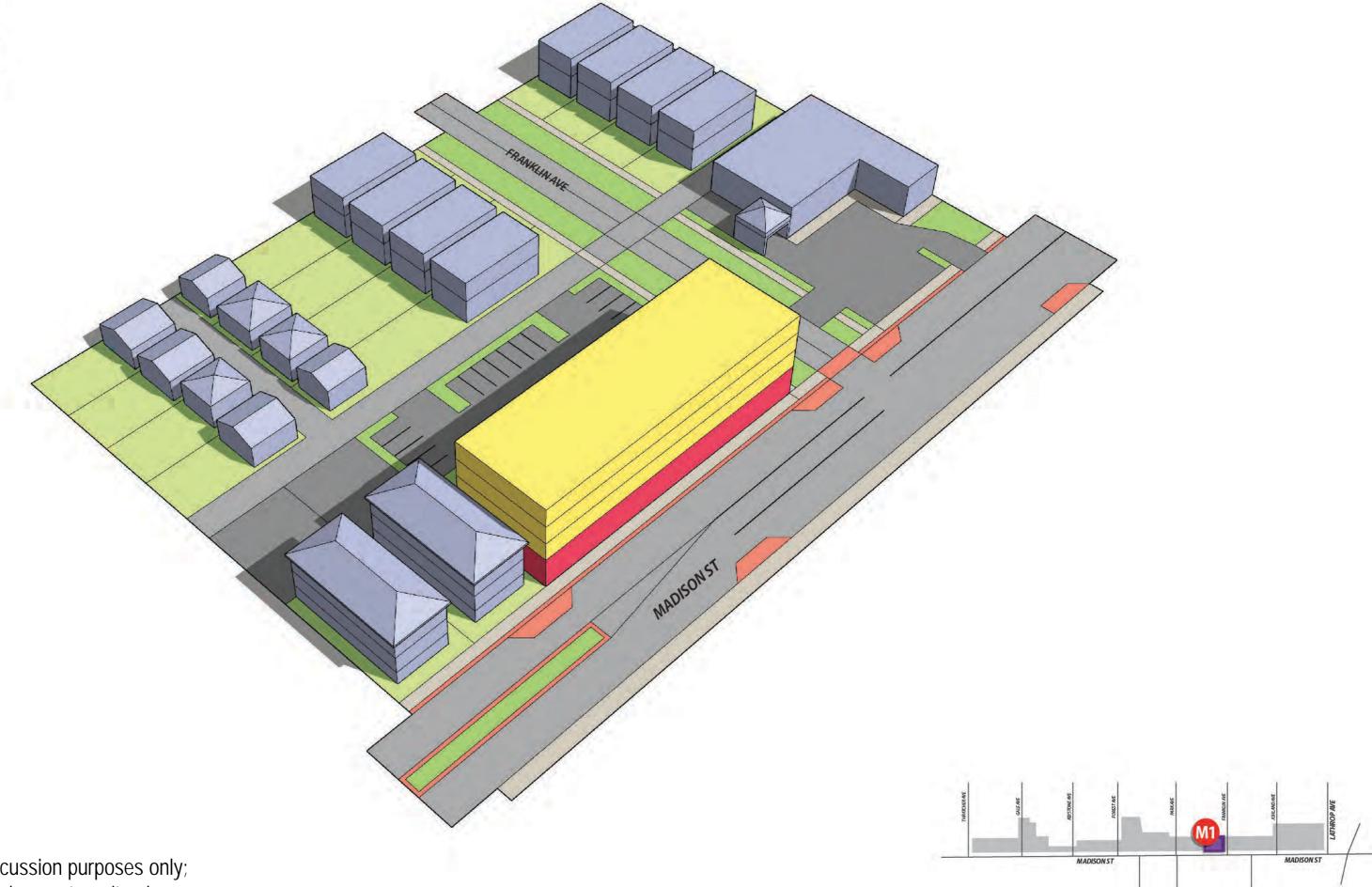


# MADDISON STREET OPP SITE M1



Opp Site M1

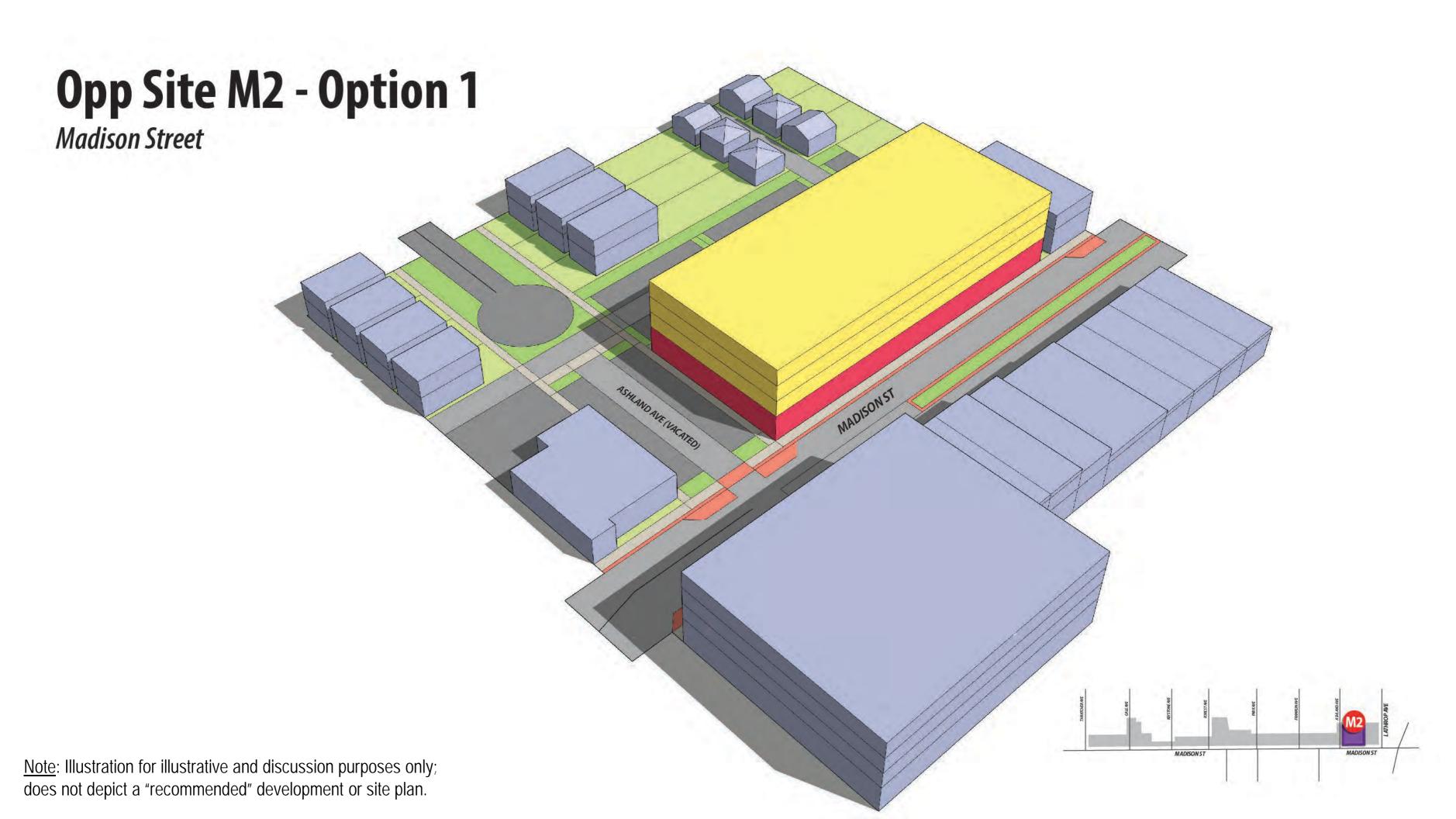
**Madison Street** 

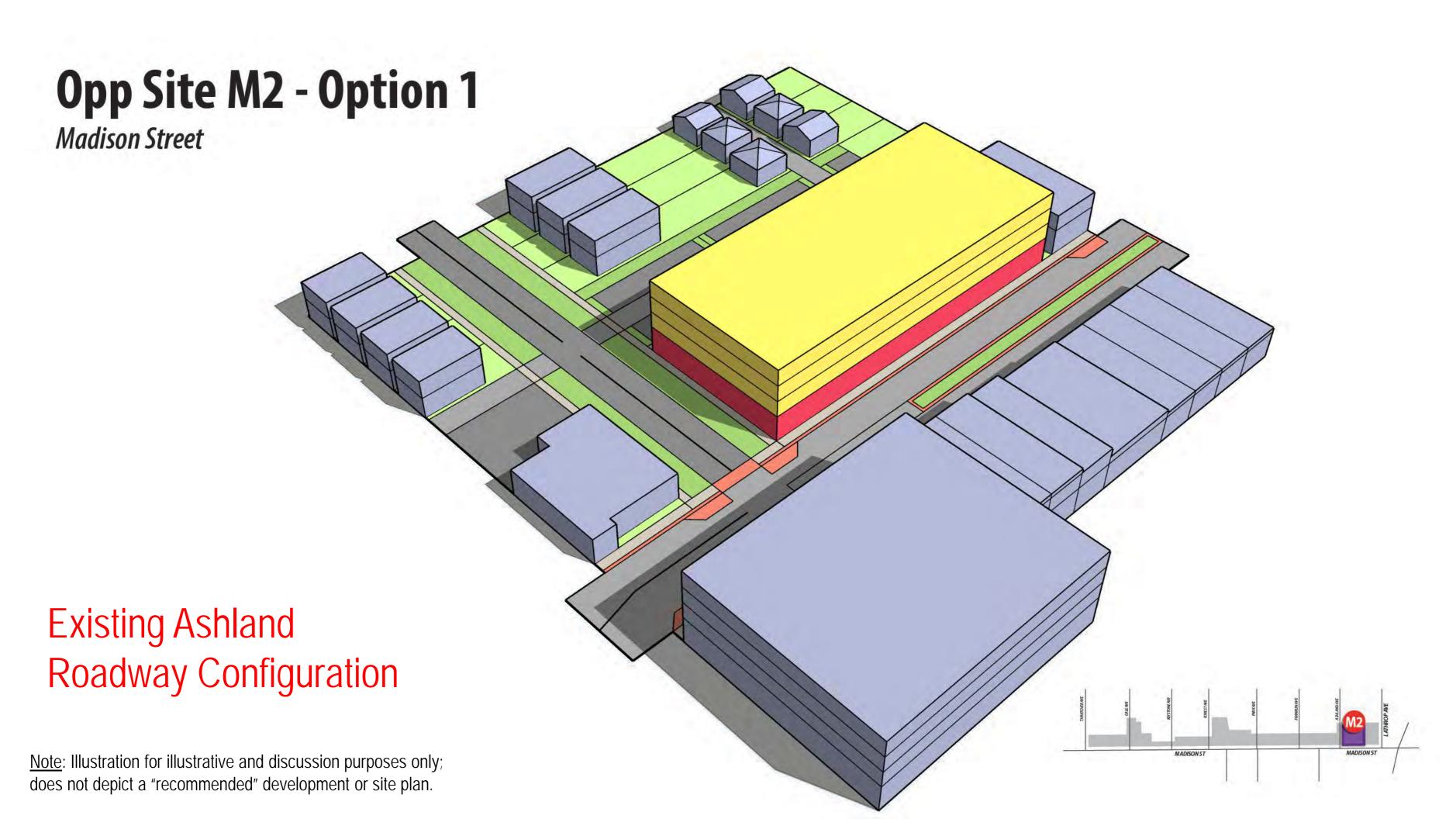


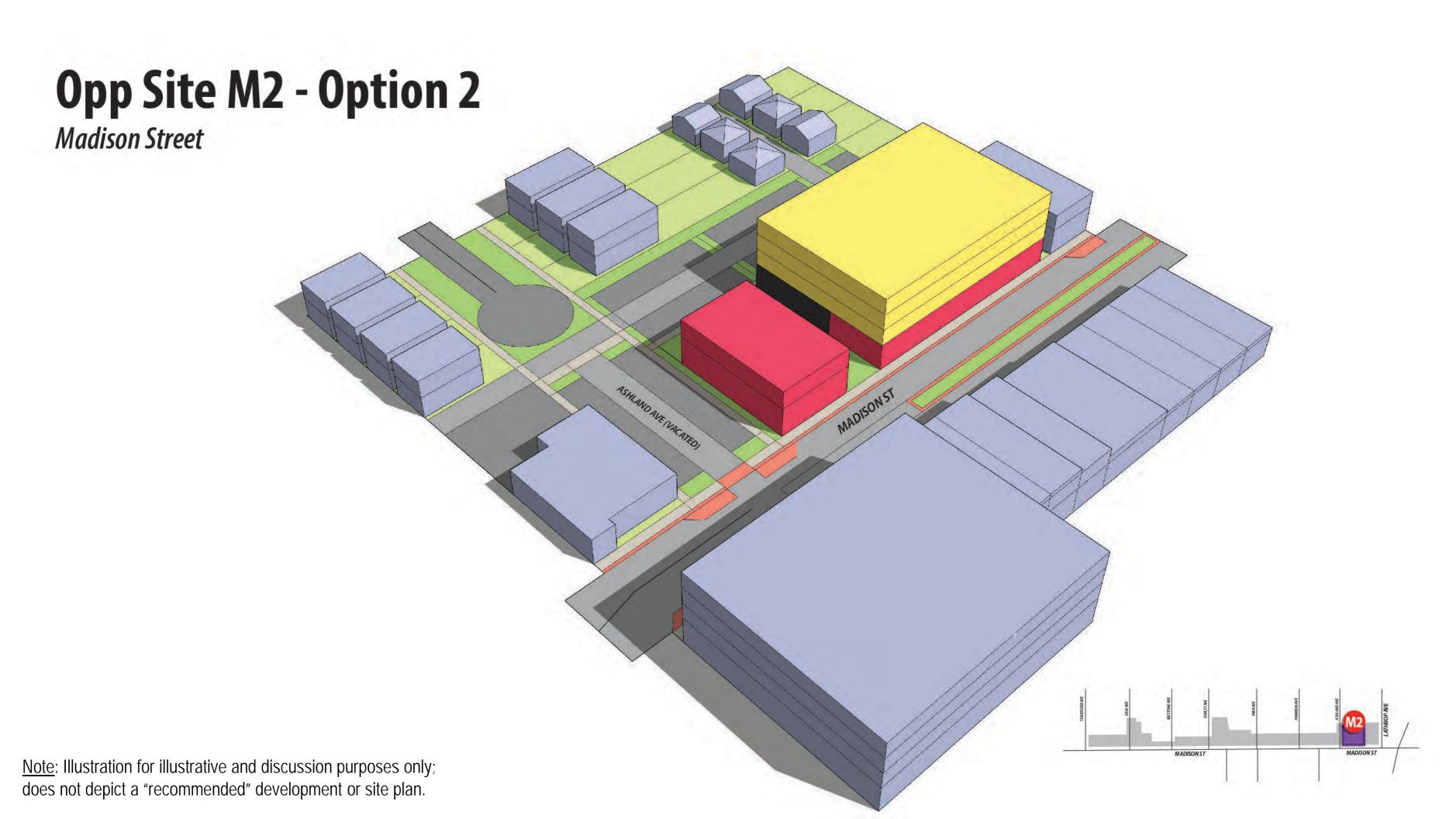
Note: Illustration for illustrative and discussion purposes only; does not depict a "recommended" development or site plan.

# MADDISON STREET OPP SITE M2









# PRELIMINARY ZONING CONSIDERATIONS

# **Zoning Considerations**

# Parking Requirements: North Ave and Madison St

- Existing 2 parking spaces per unit
- Propose 1.0 1.5 parking spaces per unit

# **Building Height:** North Avenue

- Existing **50**°
- Propose 65' (allows for a 5-story building w/ contemporary groundfloor tenant space)
- Example 18' ground floor; 11' second floor; 11' third floor; 11' fourth floor; 11' fifth floor

# **Building Height: Madison Street**

- Existing **30**'
- Propose **50'** (allows for a 4-story building w/ contemporary groundfloor tenant space)
- Example 15' groundfloor; 11' second floor; 11' third floor; 11' fourth floor

# **Density**:

- Existing 2,800 sf of lot area per unit = 17 dua
- Propose: 500-1000 sf of lot area per unit = 87-43 dua

# FAR:

- Existing 2.75
- Propose: Eliminate FAR Requirement

# Unit Size:

- Existing 1,800 sf (average gross living area)
- Propose: 1,000 sf (average gross living area)

# Setbacks:

No changes recommended

# **Bedroom Requirement:**

 Consider eliminating requirement that "every unit shall have at least one bedroom (no studios)"

# **Neighboring Communities**

# Parking:

River Forest: 2 spaces/unit

Oak Park: 1 space per unit

Elmwood Park: 1.25 spaces per unit

Forest Park: 2 spaces per unit

# Height:

River Forest: 30' Madison; 50' North

Oak Park: 50' (Madison Street); Forest
 Park: 50' (Madison Street)

Elmwood Park: 60'-75' (North Ave)

# Density:

River Forest: 2,800 lot area/unit

Oak Park: 750-1000 lot area/unit

Elmwood Park: 1250 lot area/unit

# Developer Feedback/Comments

Spoke with developers, architects, and planners familiar with and active in the River Forest/Oak Park/Forest Park general area, and elsewhere. Architects and planners interviewed had/have experience working with multiple developers on a variety of developments including residential, mixed-use, commercial, and more. The comments listed to the right represent a general summary/key take-aways from the discussions.

- Height: Minimum of 4 stories needed; 5-6+ stories more realistic/preferred.
- Parking: 2 spaces/per unit is too much; 1.0-1.25 spaces/unit for residential more appropriate.
- Density: 2,800 lot area per unit is unrealistic and not achievable. Trending densities are higher to provide more housing in existing services areas. 400-500 sf lot area per unit was cited.
- Setbacks: Should be zero against other commercial and something against residential; current setbacks ok.
- FAR: Not necessary if height and other standards are in place.
- Uses: Retail is very challenging west of Des Plaines on Madison Street

# THANK YOU