



## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** September 4, 2019

SENT VIA EMAIL

**To:** Katie Simpson  
City of Bloomington

**From:** John Houseal, FAICP  
Cofounder | Principal

Jackie Wells, Associate

**Re: R-3B Zoning District Analysis  
Initial Policy Direction**

The purpose of the R-3B District Analysis is to investigate the appropriateness of the existing regulations governing the R-3B zoned parcels adjacent to the Downtown in the context of the neighborhood character, neighborhood concerns, and goals of the Comprehensive Plan to provide policy recommendations to the Plan Commission and City Council accompanied by any necessary zoning text and map amendments. This memorandum is an incremental step, preceding the drafting of any recommendations, to receive direction on the policy which will guide the crafting of any zoning text and map amendments.

### Existing Conditions

The R-3B Zoning District Analysis study area is comprised of 223 parcels located on the fringe of Downtown Bloomington. More than 85 percent of the lots in the area were primarily built as single-family detached homes while the remaining 15 percent of lots are split nearly evenly between single-family attached and multifamily structures. Although the vast majority of buildings were originally intended to be single-family detached homes, 55 have since been converted to single-family attached and multifamily dwellings. Despite the high number of conversions, the character of the area remains that of a primarily single-family detached neighborhood, traditionally found adjacent to a downtown. Through community engagement with staff, Plan Commission members, and residents as a part of this study and the recently completed Zoning Ordinance Update, a desire to preserve and enhance this existing character was expressed.

The condition of homes in the study area varies greatly from pristinely preserved historic mansions to blighted and deteriorating converted homes. Opportunities for teardown and infill development exist throughout the area, making appropriate regulations imperative.

### Existing Regulations

The R-3B High Density Multi-Family Residential District allows for up to seventy (70) dwelling units per acre and up to six stories, the highest residential density allowed in Bloomington. The district also allows for smaller sized single-family lots than the other districts.

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### Existing Policy

Parcels in the study area east of downtown are recognized in the Comprehensive Plan as “Preservation” area while those west of downtown are “Regeneration” area. The Plan recommends balancing preservation with market demands of demolition or conversion in the “Preservation” area and recommends a comprehensive and collaborative approach for revitalizing the “Regeneration” area.

### Preliminary Policy Direction

Based on meetings with City staff, the Plan Commission, Preservation Area stakeholders, and Regeneration Area stakeholders along with research and assessment of existing regulations and field reconnaissance conducted in June 2019, it is recommended that the City of Bloomington consider the following policy changes for the R-3B study area.

- Revise the code to permit development that is more reflective of the existing scale and character of the neighborhood including single-family detached, single-family attached, and small scale multifamily.
- Reduce the maximum permitted density to less than the 70 units per acre currently allowed.
- Reduce the maximum permitted height to less than the 65 feet currently allowed in most areas.
- Explore the creation of regulations to further restrict the conversion of single-family detached structures to multi-unit dwellings.
- Explore the expansion of the rental property registration and inspection process for owner-occupied units.
- Explore opportunities to encourage local preservation of eligible properties.