



CITY COUNCIL MEETING

AGENDA SECTION	ITEM FOR CONSIDERATION
MEETING DATE	03/23/2026

ITEM:	Comprehensive Plan Amendment for 4300 Central Avenue from Commercial and Park to Transit Oriented Development	
<i>Presenting Item: Ursula Brandt, City Planner</i>		
DEPARTMENT: Community Development	BY/DATE: Ursula Brandt. City Planner 03/23/2026 Rita Trapp and Kendra Ellner, HKGi Consulting Planners, 03/16/2026	
CORE CITY STRATEGIES: <i>(please indicate areas that apply by adding an "X" in front of the selected text below)</i>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Community that Grows with Purpose and Equity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Engaged, Effective and Forward-Thinking	
<input type="checkbox"/> High Quality Public Spaces	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Resilient and Prosperous Economy	
<input type="checkbox"/> Safe, Accessible and Built for Everyone	<input type="checkbox"/> Inclusive and Connected Community	

BACKGROUND

The City of Columbia Heights is initiating a Comprehensive Plan Amendment for two properties located at 4300 Central Avenue NE. Currently, the 2040 Comprehensive Plan guides the future land use for the property on the east side adjacent to Central Avenue as 'Commercial.' The city-owned parcel on the west side along Quincy Avenue, which contains a stormwater pond, is designated as 'Park.' This site previously operated as a shopping mall before falling into disrepair more than a decade ago. As a result, the property at 4300 Central Avenue was sold and the buildings demolished. Over the last decade, various redevelopment efforts have been pursued, but no project has come to fruition due to market fluctuations.

The current property owner and developer, Alatus, is working collaboratively with the City to prepare redevelopment concepts that align with the City's vision and respond to current market needs. The concepts that are being explored for the site include a mix of commercial and residential uses. Since the site's current 'Commercial' and 'Park' future land use designations do not allow residential uses, a Comprehensive Plan Amendment is necessary to provide greater flexibility and support the redevelopment of mixed-use on the site. The proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendment would reguide the site from its current 'Commercial' and 'Park' designations to a single future land use designation of 'Transit Oriented Development' (TOD). The stormwater pond is included in the Comprehensive Plan Amendment as it may be relocated on the property as part of the redevelopment project.

Areas guided as TOD anticipate a mix of 85% residential and 15% commercial uses, with a density range of 25-65 units per acre. It is estimated that redevelopment of the site could result in an additional 275 to 500 households and 650 to 1,700 people. Analysis of the proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendment included consideration of whether the City's forecasts need to be updated. With the release of Imagine 2050, the City is required to conduct its evaluation using the 2050 Comprehensive Plan forecasts shown below. According to the MN State Demographer, the City is estimated to have 8,872 households in 2024. The forecasts assume the

addition of approximately 728 households by 2030. Given that both development of this site and the Medtronic will be phased over a number of years and that the City is beginning its Comprehensive Plan Update process, revisions to the 2050 Comprehensive Plan forecasts are not deemed necessary.

2050 Comprehensive Plan Forecasts

Year	Population	Households	Employment
2020	21,973	8,777	3,790
2030	23,300	9,600	4,400
2040	23,600	9,900	4,500
2050	24,500	10,300	4,800

Given similar land use designations along Central Avenue, this site is a strong candidate for TOD reguidance. There is also a planned MnDOT reconstruction project proposed for 2028, including the addition of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) F-Line. These factors, along with evolving market conditions and the property’s long-term vacancy, support a Comprehensive Plan Amendment to transit oriented development. Additional information is provided in the March 3, 2026 Planning Commission packet.

SUMMARY OF PLANNING COMMISSION DISCUSSION

The Planning Commission held the required public hearing on March 3, 2026. Staff presented the item and provided an overview of the community engagement process, which included a neighborhood meeting on February 18, 2026, and a public survey. Two members of the public spoke at the Planning Commission meeting. They raised concerns related to stormwater, sanitation, and taxes.

Following the public hearing, commissioners asked questions and discussed the proposed amendment. The Planning Commission then voted unanimously to recommend approval of the Comprehensive Plan Amendment, including the findings of fact and conditions outlined by staff in the meeting packet.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Council approve Resolution No. 2026-018, Comprehensive Plan Amendment for 4300 Central Ave NE, as presented.

<p>RECOMMENDED MOTION(S):</p> <p>MOTION: Motion to waive the reading of Resolution 2026-018, there being ample copies available to the public.</p> <p>MOTION: Motion to approve the adoption of Resolution 2026-018, which approves the proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendment for the properties at 4300 Central Avenue to Transit Oriented Development and directs staff to submit the amendment to the Metropolitan Council.</p>

ATTACHMENT(S):

1. Resolution No. 2026-018, Comprehensive Plan Amendment for 4300 Central Avenue
2. Future Land Use Existing and Proposed Map Change
3. March 3, 2026 Planning Commission Staff Report with Exhibit Attachments